

**HALLELUJAH!**

**JIMMY  
SWAGGART  
INTERVIEW**

**TV'S NO. 1  
ROCK & HOLY  
ROLLER TALKS—AND  
SO DO A FEW  
PEOPLE HE NEVER  
THOUGHT WOULD**

**CHRISSIE  
HYNDE**

**THE GREAT  
PRETENDER**

**FOUNTAINHEAD**

**TIMBUK 3**

**HOUSEMARTINS**

**B-52's**

**THE REAL SID & NANCY**

**JOE TEX'S BOOK OF LOVE**

**RICHARD BELZER**

**SANTA COOL**

**THERE'S A RIOT GOIN' ON:  
VIOLENCE AT L.A. CONCERTS**

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December 1986

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**TOPSPIN** / Introductions 6

**POINT BLANK** / Letters 8

### FLASH

David Rudder, B-52's, Alan Moore's *Swamp Thing*, Timbuk 3, Wop Dancing, the Housemartins, Flaming Lips, World Beat, *Crime and the City Solution*. 10

### SWEET EXCESS

Our own unrepentant punk scribe cuts the crap and spills the truth about Sid & Nancy, the Sex Pistols, and that mysterious mojo called punk rock. What a short, strange trip it was.  
*By Richard Hell.* 21

### BAD HABITS

Cartoon by Norman Dog. 27

**SPINS** / Records 29

**UNDERGROUND** 44

**SINGLES** 46

### HYNDE SIGHT

When she was 21, Chrissie Hynde sold her guitar and left for England with \$500 and three albums: *White Light*, *White Heat*, *Raw Power*, and *Fun house*. If you were this cool, maybe this story would be about you.  
*By Scott Cohen.* 48

### JOE TEX BOOK OF LOVE

Joe Tex, the original rapper, was misled and left for dead, but he never gave up on love. No sir.  
*By Scott Cohen.* 56

### O, BROTHER

Brother Jimmy Swaggart is on the rampage against rock. In our exposé and interview, we discover that people in glass churches shouldn't throw stones. *By Michelle Mayron.* 58

### THERE'S A RIOT GOING ON

Welcome to L.A., where a concert just ain't a concert unless the law uses fire hoses to restrain the crowd. On September 28, a man was killed at the Street Scene festival. And everyone—the cops, the punks, the gangs—is pointing fingers. *By Annette Stark.* 68

### RHYTHM ATTACK

In a corner of Dublin far from the buzz surrounding U2 and their disciples, the Fountainhead are making some of the most infectious dance music to be heard anywhere in a long time.  
*By Ellen Cannon Peck.* 79

### MOVING IMAGES

Cisco & Egbert, Richard Belzer. 83

### SANTA COOL

Being Santa Claus can be a bitch. Ever try picking up a girl while wearing a red suit?  
*By Glenn O'Brien.* 90



# TOP SPIN

## Who's Who, What's What, and Why

Forget nuclear disarmament—if we could disarm the Bible-thumpers and Koran-wavers we'd be ahead of the game. The world would be safer, more peaceful.

Religion isn't evil, the ignorant and manipulative interpretation of it is. Lives aren't being lost in Belfast or Beirut because people want to go to church—it's because of the political and tragic exploitation of the average person's instincts and even superstitions. In war, religion is used as a sort of a moral override, to expedite the killing, circumvent the doubt and guilt. It's a stimulant and a moral loophole.

America is a curious country, made up of everyone else's refugees and cultures, but we have personality traits no other country in the world could have thought of, and some no one else can imitate. Evangelists are patently American. They're almost an art form, like jazz.

Since this country began rubbing its eyes awake in the 1600s, there have been preachers preying on a young nation's insecurities and fears. It was a good business—overhead was low, you could, in a pinch, get away with the baptismal water and the wheels you came into town on. God was and is public domain, so use of His name was and is cheap.

Success for evangelist preachers depends on the same skills and luck as the common hustler needs: the ability to read human nature perfectly and to exploit it remorselessly.

Jimmy Lee Swaggart knows the game and plays it superbly. He knows some people are always looking for answers and he's smart enough to know how much business there is in selling them. He works hard for his money—he tours as relentlessly as the Grateful Dead, performs as strenuously as Springsteen, and plays a lot of the same venues. The difference isn't entertainment—they all give a good show—the difference is, Swaggart advertises what isn't his to sell: paradise, redemption, spiritual salvation.

In a sense, he's the American dream personified. Or is it nightmare? Or is there a difference?

He was the only surviving child of Louisiana drifters. The father was a bootlegger and arrested for rustling cattle. A thief when he was 10, Jimmy didn't get much of an education, but he got religion.

His rise through the evangelical ranks must have been as tough as the average fast ball pitcher getting through the minors. But he persisted—and I guess his stuff wasn't average after all. As soon as he got into the majors he showed that. There were slow nights in tank towns, for sure, but when he played the big towns—

Boston, New York, L.A., San Francisco, Chicago,—he had his heat.

He parlayed hard work and charisma and the evangelical instinct into an empire. Tax and accountability free. (It is the American Dream, then.)

When Jimmy Swaggart attacked rock 'n' roll he made a bold business move. On the one hand, it gained him more publicity than he'd ever had and it became his most celebrated and volatile campaign ever. On the other hand, it draws him into the open, out of the safety of his own carefully controlled environment. It's easier preaching to a mesmerized flock than standing behind the same sales pitch in the open market.

I won't waste the paper to once again argue his absurd contentions about rock 'n' roll, but just bear this in mind, because it applies to the PMRC or the National Federation of Decency or the rest of them: if we say that our music dissolves our society and corrupts our children, that is a condemnation of our society, and ourselves as parents. My parents told me "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Was their generation that much tougher than we are?

I believe Jimmy Swaggart is a con man, shamelessly using God to make a fortune for himself and his family. What shall it profit a man to inherit all the Earth if he should lose his soul? About \$150 million a year, if you're good at it.

In Michelle Mayron's story ("O, Brother," p. 58), we expose the not-so-holy side of Swaggart's kingdom. Michelle, a reporter for the Israeli newspapers *Yediot Ahronot* and *Koterat Rhashit*, spent several days with Swaggart and interviewed him at length in Washington, D.C., and Baton Rouge. Swaggart was only too happy to tell her what he wanted her to hear. He will be less happy with what many others closely connected with him had to say, including his former director of finance. Michelle was able to discover a picture very different from the sickly sweet and pious one presented to the public.

One person told her an interesting story. Apparently, Swaggart was hosting some sort of evangelical conference and when the attendees arrived at the airport, Swaggart brought a fleet of cars to pick them up. A cab driver, seeing the popular preacher, called to him and asked him why he hadn't let the cabbies take the people out to him so they could make some money. Jimmy leaned on the cab and said, "If you want to make money, learn to preach."

Brother Swaggart learned. If you want to pray for salvation, pray for salvation from the preachers.

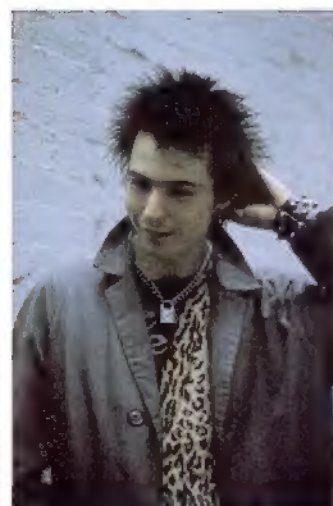
—Bob Guccione, Jr.



Olga Shargyer/Daily News



Mike Kato/Capanna Liaison



Adrian Boot/Reno UT



Roy Charles White

Top: Ugly scene at an L.A. rock show (p. 68). Above left: Ugly scene on our TV screen. But SPIN found out more about evangelist Jimmy Lee Swaggart than he wanted anyone to know (p. 58). Above right: Gone but not forgotten: Sid Vicious remembered by Richard Hell (p. 21). Left: Unscathed by the ugliness around him, tri-state editor Glenn O'Brien ponders the meaning of Christmas.

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and the mini RX-FM40 both come with an auto-reverse cassette recorder as well as an equalizer for extra control over the sound. And, of course, both portables come with an AM/FM stereo tuner.

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# POINT BLANK



George DuBois

## Letters

Edited by Karen Dolan

### A Murmur to a scR.E.M.

I'm so sick of people ranking Michael Stipe for being Michael Stipe (Spins, October). Critics hate Stipe because he won't take a stand. He doesn't scream "working class," "hate war," "born in the U.S.A." He is an artist. People don't tell artists how to paint a picture. Let Michael Stipe be Michael Stipe and stop worrying about what his goal in life is.

C. Walton  
Richmond, VA

From the minute the stylus finished gliding through the LP *Murmur*, I've been one of the many ardent followers of R.E.M. I have to admit, though, that sometime between then and now I must have missed out on something, at least according to Sue Cummings. Even with repeated listening to *Murmur*, I never got drunk. I certainly

Rockers without a cause? R.E.M. (L-R): Michael Stipe, Mike Mills, Peter Dinklage, Bill Berry.

never experienced any hallucinations causing me to develop a "soft-focus, pre-Raphaelite, dance-barefoot-in-the-kudzu utopian vision." She can't understand the lyrics and, worse yet, the symbolism totally confounds her. Any first-year student of R.E.M. philosophy could tell her that she's totally missed the point.

Scott T. Schnalzer  
Bethlehem, PA

### Rock 'n' roll heaven

I am a Christian. I read with some anxiety the piece on Jimmy Swaggart ("The Gospel According to Jimmy," October). While at times Swaggart can display a fair amount of Biblical prowess, most of the time he leaves me alienated. He would like to make the world believe that God will save us if we all get together and throw our rock records in the toilet. He has also condemned Christian rock. Well, Jimmy, this Christian is very tired of you. I'll bet God taps his toes, maybe even plays a little air guitar, every time he hears "Spirit in the Sky." This is one Christian who attends concerts, buys

rock from Aerosmith to Zappa, is going to heaven, hopes you all do too, and thinks Swaggart is an ass.

B. Dirk Yarborough  
Huntington Beach, CA

I have been listening to rock music for 17 years and have never felt the urge to commit suicide, do drugs, get pregnant, or do any of the other things Swaggart claims rock music makes you do. I disagree with you when you say Swaggart is not a lunatic. He is a very wealthy lunatic and a very dangerous man. Parents should stop worrying about what rock music does to their children and start worrying about people like Swaggart. Who the hell does this guy think he is... God?

Cynthia Elbaum  
Atlantic City, NJ

I am an 18-year-old born-again Christian. My family accepted the Lord over five years ago, but we still love our rock 'n' roll. Dad (45) loves Seger, Mom (38) loves the Who and David Lee, and Sis and her hubby love Twisted Sister. Me? I'm into metal, punk, anything non-fashionable. Yes, I listen to those "groups known for their perverted actions," and I still haven't had sex with any dead women or killed myself or anyone else. Cain killed Abel, and it wasn't after listening to Iron Maiden. Necrophilia was practiced during the Dark Ages to revive and touch a dead soul, not because someone read about it in *Hit Parader*. I just hope that in the end, the Lord judges me for what's in my heart, not in my record collection.

Matt Herring  
Broad Brook, CT

I thought I went to a concert or listened to a record to have some fun and escape from the daily grind. I thought I knew who I liked and why. But now I find I don't know a thing! Thank you, Jimmy Swaggart! I thought I felt suicidal because my husband left me and wouldn't pay child support and I lost my job and couldn't find another one and the landlord was trying to kick me out and... But now, great great God Almighty, I know it is all because of rock 'n' roll.

Pauline Moore  
State College, PA

### R&R rationing

I am offended by the "America First" advertising campaign being conducted by Wal-Mart, Inc. Wal-Mart's removal of materials from its shelves because of objections to their contents was a repudiation of the principles this nation fought to defend. Perhaps I am old-fashioned, but I still believe the traditional values of the Bill of Rights, limited government, and individual freedom are worth protecting. Other businesses offered their customers the opportunity to vote on whether to

continue offering for sale items particular groups found objectionable. Wal-Mart, however, did not give even this small nod to democratic values; instead, Wal-Mart decided to choose for its patrons which items would be appropriate. I therefore believe Wal-Mart has forfeited the privilege of using an advertising campaign that claims a special loyalty to American principles. Wal-Mart's actions suggest they believe traditional American values are meaningless except as a public relations device.

Leon C. Miller  
Fayetteville, AK

### Loving Morrissey

Paul Morrissey may be celibate (and so what if he is?), but he is also undeniably pensive, refreshing, wide awake, sensitive, knowledgeable, temperate, and socially conscious. Perhaps Jessica Berens ("Spirit in the Dark," September) should be thrilled that she had the opportunity to interview such a person, something most of us will never do, instead of concerning herself so overtly with Morrissey's love life.

Clare O'Donnell  
Eden, NY

### Boy George

I just finished reading your October interview with Boy George. I enjoyed the actual interview, as I thought it was quite open and honest. But after reading the introduction, I'm convinced that George is correct in trying to avoid the press—they are trying to crucify him. To say he is unloved and without friends is Kofler's opinion and, I might add, an inaccurate one. I loved George before this horrible thing, and I still think the world of him. He's changed so many people's minds about a lot of things in the course of his career. And now that he's made a mistake, I don't believe we ought to change our minds about him.

Lonna Sullivan  
Beaumont, TX

### Da BoDeans

Many thanks for an informative and positive article on the band most deserving of the title you printed next to their photograph: "The Sound and the Power" (September). I've not been so elated to discover a new band in years. Even after dozens of listens to their debut LP, I find new excitement in every song. Their lyrics are simply stated yet intensely personal. Their moods range from joy to desolation. I'm floored by their energy. By the way, the photo printed on page 22 is of Beau (Kurt) BoDean, not Sammy, but that is his lower half in the other photo ("the shoes of a decent hard-working American").

L.Z.  
St. Louis, MO



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# FLASH

Edited  
by  
John Leland



David Ann Saunders

## SEX BOMB BABY CALYPSO "KING" DAVID RUDDER COPES WITH SUCCESS

Trinidad isn't an easy place to be a hero. Since David Rudder won the Calypso Monarchy, the Young Kings' Calypso Competition, and the Carnival Road March prizes last February (an unprecedented sweep of the nation's calypso triple crown), his phone hasn't stopped ringing. Little girls send him love letters, somewhat less-than-little girls camp out in front of the small flat he shares with his mother. Perfect strangers collar him in the street to tell him what to do next. "I'm trying to keep my head on a center," David says ruefully. "One lady came wagging her finger in my face and told me: 'In five years I'll either be talkin' to you in your big fancy office, or I'll be trippin' over you in the gutter.'"

Rudder, 32, has caught the fancy of his country like no other musician since the Mighty Sparrow, and he's starting to do the same overseas. This summer, he and his band, Charlie's Roots, played to wild ovations in Canada, New York, and London; Eddy Grant remixed two of Rudder's and Roots' singles, and they've been released by Polygram U.K. Until early this year, Rudder was just another struggling musician working days as an accounts clerk.

Then, about six weeks before Carnival, he decided to take his songs and audition for a spot in one of Trinidad's calypso revues, or tents—a bold move, because in the touchy politics of calypso, a "band singer" like Rudder isn't considered a serious practi-

tioner of the art. Luckily for him, the tent manager wasn't interested in calypso politics; and he realized that Rudder's songs were remarkable and bound to shake up the purists. "The Hammer" and "Behie Girl" use the craftiest pop songwriting techniques to tell stories rooted in Trinidad's African traditions. They are at once modern and folksy, and they're set to the rhythms that Trinidad's Shango and Spiritual Baptists use to induce visions and euphoria.

"I grew up in Belmont, a part of Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, that was settled by a lot of black Trinidadians who were never slaves. A lot of these old families kept the African religions, so you'll find a lot of Shango up there. Charlie's Roots' drummer

lived right inside the Shango yard. My grandmother had me taken into the Spiritual Baptist church when I was little. I used to go with her to these places out in the backwoods, through the mud and slush, and I would sit there through all the chanting and singing, just absorbing everything."

How does the music translate to Rudder's new international audience? "I used to try to explain all the songs before I sang them," he laughs. "Then I realized if people like what you're doing, it really doesn't matter if they understand every little thing. The music will speak for itself. And, also, younger people in England, in America, tend to know more about the Third World. I observed that when you bend to someone else's thing, you might have a little success with it for a short time. But if you show them you, it may take longer to catch, but people will be interested for a long time to come."

Currently, Rudder is in the middle of a tropical storm: the Trinidad press, a fickle animal at best, has incited a backlash of criticism and gossip. Meanwhile, the Trinidad public is waiting, arms folded, to see what "King David" will come up with next. Rudder isn't worried, and he's back home "chilling," working on a new album, thinking about what's happened.

"Trinidad is a society that is so very talented, and yet we have this complex about being a small island. We know we have something, but it's like the big world has to say so before we can say so ourselves. This society just eats up its brightest people, and some of them can't take it, so they leave."

"V.S. Naipaul in his writings is always talking about the frustrations of growing up here. And like now, he's reached the point where he doesn't really have any place at all in this world to exist, like he outgrew everything. That cynicism, it really started in Trinidad. He got totally freaked out by the thing."

"But," he says, "I could handle it. I could stick it out."

—Deleann McLane



ED

## The B-52's Discuss Polyester, Spontaneous Combustion In Las Vegas, Skinny Dipping, And Their Future In Video

**B-52's.** Yeah, that's it. Where the hell have they been, in hiding or something? Actually they've been around, but not terribly

visible, putting out solo albums and stuff, taking some time off after guitarist Ricky Wilson died of cancer.



Laura Levine

But now they're back, with a vengeance and a new album. The band thinks *Bouncing Off the Satellites* is pretty good, at least good enough that all their parents bought it. And it's good enough for mamas Schneider, Wilson, Strickland, and Pierson, it's good enough for you.

While the group remains true to its Life-equals-Beach-Party attitude ("Don't need a man to treat me mean/I need a man to help me clean"), the B's in person are quick to talk politics: the politics of groove and the politics of love.

"We consciously made an effort to put out a good vibe on this," explains Keith Strickland (guitar, bass, and all kinds of other things). Vocalist Fred Schneider continues: "It's positive '80s flower power. I wish kids would get off their butts and stop worrying about their careers. People need to vote in all kinds of state and local elections. If anything good is going to happen, you've got to get the right people in there. If we can make other people aware, even if it's just in a small way, then that's something positive."

The group's liberal ideas, however, do not extend to their clothing. No Birkenstocks or sackcloth shirts here, no siree.

One hundred percent American polyester is the fiber of choice. Schneider tremblingly admits that "we heard about this busload of tourists in Las Vegas who were all wearing polyester and they spontaneously ignited and all jumped naked into Lake Mead." Though a long way from the days of goat farming and thrift shops in Athens, Georgia, keyboardist Kate Pierson still believes, "If you're dressed outrageously, you're just bound to have fun."

The band is still recovering from the loss of Ricky Wilson, but maintain that they are still a functioning band. Kate for one is taking the current project pretty seriously: "I think maybe we'll make a video tomorrow. I had to cancel my hair appointment and make the plumber wait another week to fix the sink. We've decided to support this album in a lot of alternative ways, ways never before dreamed of, like meditation."

Seems to be working.

—Chris Carroll

The B-52's radically update their neo-'50s kitsch and land squarely in the early '60s. Ain't progress grand? Left to right: Cindy Wilson, Keith Strickland, Kate Pierson, Fred Schneider.

## Alan Moore Adds Sin and Drugs to Swamp Thing

When the "Love and Death" issue of DC's *Swamp Thing* hit the newsstands, comic buffs might have noticed something missing from the cover. The small white seal that reads "Approved by the comic code" has appeared on all major comic books since the mid-'60s. Designed to curb the deliciously grotesque twists of the EC horror comics, the comic code was a self-policing body, similar to the now arcane Hayes code in movies. Yet it took until 1985 for a publisher to ditch the code.

There was something very different about this *Swamp Thing*, as conceived by writer Alan Moore. "This is not comics, this is ART!" roared one of the many fan letters received by DC. "This is about incest and necrophilia," groused the comic code.

"I suppose they had a point in a way," comments Moore. "It was about incest and necrophilia." It was also touching, emotional, and poetic in a way that comics, outside of Frank Miller's *Sin City*, so rarely are.

With each successive issue, Moore broke more taboos—drugs, racism, nuclear energy. But the unspoken peak was an issue entitled "The Carnot," which merged the taboos surrounding necrophilia with myths of lycanthropy (werewolves). A beleaguered housewife discovers her husband is built on the site of the last in which necrophobic women were imprisoned, kept "in the darkness, their anger growing, its mouth a great red wound."

*Swamp Thing*, a strip dredged in the sweat of the American South, is the work of an Englishman from a small provincial town in the Midlands. In fact, Alan Moore has never even been to the South. "I did get a letter from a woman in Louisiana who invited me to come down and stay with her and her husband, but then she went on to describe those sphincters that jump out of trees and bite you on the neck, so I thought, NO WAY!"

Instead, Moore sets *Swamp Thing* in a South reconstructed from photographs and news clippings sent across the Atlantic by the strip's artist Steve Bissette and the stories of William Faulkner and Truman Capote.

"It's a very textual strip, I like to think," he says. "It has that decaying feel to it that I imagine of the American South. One of the best things that Steve [Bissette] told me about the South was this van he saw driving around, and written on the side was THE WICKED WOMAN IN BELL—AVAILABLE FOR BOOKINGS. And it was video nasties for born-again Christians, they'd come round to people's houses and show them these gory images of what happens in hell! Amazing—I haven't used that one yet, but I'll have to soon."

Moore's latest venture, *Watchmen*, takes the corruption of modern America one step further, into an alternate reality where Watergate never happened, where America won the Vietnam war ("You know," says one of the characters, "if we had lost this war, I think it would have sent us a little insane"), where cars are electric, and where Nazis invented 50 varieties.

"The idea of *Watchmen* is that it will have the density of a novel; it'll be the comic strip equivalent of *Gravity's Rainbow*."

Meanwhile, Moore is working on a novel and on a film script for Malcolm McLaren's production company ("based on the life of Christian Dior, combined with the story of *Beauty and the Beast*"). Also currently on the newsstands is *Mr. Machine* (Superman as written by Nietzsche and George Bernard Shaw) and the continuing *Swamp Thing*.

"We're working on one of the newest that, I suppose, is about masturbation."

Yes, Alan, think.

—Dan Winters



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# THE POST-NUCLEAR FAMILY

## MEET TIMBUK 3: MOM, POP, AND JAMBOX

Timbuk 3 likes to categorize people into three different types, corresponding to which of the Three Stooges they most closely resemble. Or so they'd have you believe. 'Cept Timbuk 3 is at least partially kidding most of the time.

Not about important things, though. Like they know what's good. The good thing about getting a deal with IRS is now they can afford to take a babysitter on tour to attend their three-year-old son.

Timbuk 3 is Pat MacDonald, Barbara K, and a ghetto blaster loaded with bass and drum parts. The perfect nuclear family. "Our idea to start Timbuk 3," says MacDonald, "was, 'let's just work with the two of us and make as much music as we can. What can we do? What are the possibilities?' And so, all these machines made their way into our thing. We decided that if we did the most compact, smallest, lowest overhead, most portable thing we could imagine, maybe we could move forward rather than get stuck in the mud. We went and bought a jambox, portable cassette blaster, and I spent a couple weeks programming drum parts and playing bass for it.

"We got so we could carry our band around with us. We came to New York and played in Greenwich Village for a week. Sometimes we'd make like 100 bucks in an hour. We weren't losing money on that tour. So we decided that would work, but we had to move some-

where where it was warmer so we could do this year-round if we had to."

"We didn't want to get a day job," interrupts Barbara.

"Was that ever a question?"

Timbuk 3 moved to Austin, where they abandoned busking after about three songs and as many requests for "Teens music," and took up residence in the least hip bars of this musically hip town. "There were two kinds of bands in Austin," says MacDonald, "and we were maybe a third kind. There were the bands that would play one set in the showcase kind of clubs, and there would be four bands on the bill. So each gig was a kind of event. There's more press there, but you don't make any money. And then there were the bands that played cover tunes, and they'd play in a bar all night long. We, always making our living playing music, had to pursue the gigs in bars playing three sets in order to make our \$100 for the night.

"So we're coming from playing in bars, where you're not going to have the job if you don't entertain people." Nonetheless, Timbuk 3 doesn't sound like a bar band. If the group has a fault, it is being too clever. Start with the name. MacDonald: "The idea for it comes from this guy who—he's dead now, but he lived in Milwaukee. Jim Spencer was his name. He was a real literate kind of guy and entertained himself

with word plays. He had a whole religion called the Woslamic faith. The motto was, Woslaim is as Islam was. The spiritual mecca for the Woslamic faith was Timbuk 3."

Any group that gets its name this way runs the risk of being too coy for its own good. The irony of songs like the cautionary nuclear single, "The Futures So Bright I Gotta Wear Shades," goes over a lot of people's heads. "When I wrote it," explains a dumbfounded MacDonald, "I never imagined there would be people who wouldn't see the irony in it, who would see it as a very optimistic anthem. That kinda blows me away. I'm just making fun not of naive optimism but blind ambition. That kind of thing is scary. I use nuclear science because of the idea of the future being bright, but possibly from an intense blast of radiation.

"I've always found it a challenge being honest and entertaining at the same time. But for the amount of time I spend picking the world apart and analyzing it and looking at the dark underside, I spend an equal amount of time piecing it together, trying to see where there can be some kind of beauty in life. I don't have any trouble seeing beauty in this life. And I hope that part of it comes into the music. Maybe that's the part that's entertaining. Or maybe they like hearing a bunch of nasty stuff, too."

Barbara cuts in. "You like to write a nice melody with a funky groove that brings people in, then you like to jab them with your elbow once you've got them."

— John Leland





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Dorothy Low

Step off Pee-wee Herman. Hip hop's flickle dance floor has embraced yet another dance craze this winter: a wobbly new step called the wop.

"Remember the scarecrow when the girl gets him off the pole?" asks Janette Colón of Brooklyn. "The way he moves is kind of like doing the wop. There was a dance in the '50s called the potato. A lot of wop stems from that." Janette and her twin sister Vanessa cruise New York rap clubs in search of the best dancers. They claim the dance started on their own turf, Flatbush. "The wop couldn't have started in Manhattan," laughs Janette. "Their necks are too stiff."

The neck is the most important wopping tool. "Start by moving it side to side slowly. A lot of people will be coming to school on Mondays with sore necks 'cause they tried to wop but couldn't cut it," says Janette. "You move your neck from side to side real slow, then you swipe your legs back and forth in the opposite

## DOWN BY LAW

Sore Necks  
And The Art Of  
Wop Dancing

direction. After you get that down, you move your hips and snap your fingers. If you're really good, you start adding your own moves."

Most of the kids have graduated to working out custom-made steps of their own. "There's

already a snake wop," says Janette. She breaks into a winding motion, slinking her body all the way to the floor.

"When a girl wops with her guy it's called 'battling.' You have as many guy woppers out there as you do girls."

Other additions to the dance are the freak (wildest of the versions), the chain wop (several dancers wopping at once), and the vogue wop, which features girls sliding to and fro as they primp themselves with fashion magazine fervor.

Crucial wop records are "Eric B Is President" by Eric B, "South Bronx" by Scott La Rock, and "Wopit" by B-Fats. Proper wop attire consists of a clean pair of Fila sneakers, baggy pants, and a Coca-Cola sweatshirt or an oversized college sweater. "Anybody can do it," says Janette. "It's all about moving your head just right and bouncing." Her words trail off as she breaks into it again. "You know... wopping." —Scott Mehno

## BUMMED IN MAYBERRY

The Smithereens Succeed But Still Don't Meet Floyd The Barber

The best thing about finally making it is, for the Smithereens, seeing the country.

"We were in Mount Airy, which is the town they supposedly patterned Mayberry after," says drummer Dennis Diken. "But being in Raleigh—which is where Barney Fife always went on vacation—only enhanced my belief in Floyd the Barber. I dug it."

The Smithereens are now in a truck-stop somewhere in Illinois. They don't know where, or what day it is. This success. After six years in New York area clubs, with two exquisite but obscure pop EPs gaining them welcome but useless popularity in the rock crit world, the Smithereens seemed well on their way to permanent minor-league status when Enigma—armed with a Capitol distribution deal—signed 'em up. In short order, they found themselves with two tunes on a movie soundtrack (the short-lived *Dangerously Close*), in rotation on MTV with a clip ("Blood and Roses") sponsored by the film company, and in the stores and on the radio with the Don Dixon-produced *Especially for You*. "We've been pursuing the same course and suddenly there's interest, although the band is not radically different than it was four

years ago," says singer-songwriter-guitarist Pat DiNizio. "A few new songs maybe, but the intent of the band hasn't changed. I guess it just had to take this amount of time." Diken agrees, adding that their current tour is "the same as we've always done, except we're doing it every night and driving all around to get there." But he's clearly enjoying the

experience: "As Canned Heat said back in '69, it's the same all over—good people everywhere you go."

The Smithereens started off like a zillion other garage bands, playing Who, Kinks, and Beach Boys covers. They cut a nifty 1980 seven-inch, "Girls About Town," and a stunning mini-LP, *Beauty and Sadness*, on the Little Ricky

label in 1983. They also served as Otis Blackwell's backup band for a couple of years and did a 1984 Scandinavian tour when their record proved popular enough as an import to warrant a local release.

Although the Smithereens have a power pop rep to live down, the album has more in common with freethinking pop revisionists like the Smiths than such rootsy outfits as the Beatles. Although the record owes a debt to everyone from Carl Perkins to the Beau Brummels, it's not a revival of anything; rather, in DiNizio's words, it is "the sum total of all our influences. My influences as a songwriter are AM radio—growing up listening to Cousin Bruce and Scott Muni on 77 WABC—classic pop songwriting. The last thing I'd want to do is consciously recreate a period sound."

Reflecting on the band's current good fortune, DiNizio says, "It's a very strange lifestyle. You pursue it, and then when it happens, you have mixed emotions. I'd rather be doing this than anything else, but it's strange."

Be careful what you wish for, they say. You just might get it.

—Ira Robbins



Bonnie Graham



A close-up portrait of a woman with voluminous, curly blonde hair, smiling and looking upwards. She is wearing a white jacket and a pearl necklace. Her right hand is raised near her face, and her left arm is resting on a surface in the foreground.

So I said, "Okay, okay, Akar."



# BLINDED BY GOSPEL

The Housemartins Prove That Even Chirpy English Wimps Can Have Soul

Paul Rider/Reino Ltd.



In Britain we have train-spotters: spotty and spectacled young white males who stand on the platforms of railway stations, notebooks in hand, writing down the serial numbers of passing locomotives. They do this to compare serial numbers with other train-spotters.

In Britain we also have the Housemartins. The Housemartins are four spotty young men (one of whom wears terrible glasses) from a grim northern town called Hull who specialize in traditional '60s-style guitar pop overlaid with soul vocals.

Singer Paul Heaton, the most charismatic Housemartin, confesses on interview in his spiritual brethren: "I do know a little about train-spotters, more than I know about trains anyway. I was sitting at Doncaster Station the other day, which is, shall we say, a particularly heady part of the train-spotter's world, and there was this kid taking round a petition, 'cause they're trying to get rid of the train-spotters of Doncaster Station. This poor kid came up to the newspaper vendor and said, 'Will you sign my petition?' And the vendor said, 'No, I bloody won't. You train-spotters are always 'round my ankles!' But this kid said, 'I'm not your normal train-spotter, I'm only 15.' And the newspaper vendor said, 'Bugger off! You've got to be hard with train-spotters.'"

People have not been hard with the Housemartins, which is odd, considering the band's anachronistic personality. "Some of our songs are angrily political, and some of them sound jolly, and people think we're a jolly, wacky band," says Norman, bassist and least spotty Housemartin. "The lyrics are angry, and we do care about things, and we wanna change things. The thing is, a lot of political bands just make you feel guilty."

The Housemartins will into political writing almost by accident. Says Norman: "Paul realized that he hated writing about love, he couldn't write about love, and that writing politically came easier to him, and that's what he wanted to do."

The band has also been known to launch into gospel numbers and declare themselves unified by Karl Marx and Jesus Christ. Are you having us on, Norman? "It's not totally tongue-in-cheek; it's not a joke. We all believe it. Obviously we put some humor into it because you can't sit down and say, 'I believe in Jesus, and the world would be a better place if we all got together.' We're not soberly religious, we don't pray and go to church, but we are religious. We're religious, but we're not Christians."

They are secretly thoughtful young men, the Housemartins. They do not want to last forever and will probably split up when they have achieved what they want to achieve. And even Paul can come to terms with being compared to train-spotters. "We all accept ourselves. As Jung said, 'accept yourself and your shadow.'"

Jung, God, Karl Marx, hit singles. And train-spotting. A remarkable band, I think.

—David Quantick

The Housemartins, clockwise: Norman Cook, Stan Collinson, Hugh Whitaker, Paul (Ed.) Heaton.

The Flaming Lips would probably not be the best spokesmen for our president's War on Drugs. This trio of Okies plays the trippiest bron-y-aur stomp yet to emerge from the lava-lamp pits of post-p-rock muck: 90th-floor-thick fuzz riffs, dead-sea-scroll basslines, cans slapped like a bustle in your hedgerow, all truckin' through static time 'n' space amidst recited yin-yang, such as: "When I walk with you, I feel weird/When I talk with you, I feel weird... All I know/Is my mind is blown/When I'm with you."

"It wasn't so much that we wanted to be psychedelic," says singer/guitarist Wayne Coyne. "We just wanted to play Led Zep-type stuff and then play echo and play weird." Countering the massive lysergic onslaught of last year's self-released debut "Flaming Lips" EP, the threesome deliberately downplays the six-oh reference points on its new *Hear II Is* album. Nowadays, Coyne denies the "psychedelic" tag entirely. "We're more what you would call acid rock. It's like biting your teeth together and going 'Shit! That's drug music. Plasticland is like clothes music.'"

Coyne can't quantify to what extent hallucinogens actually shape the Flaming Lips sound. He's more or less a teetotaler when it comes to that stuff, he says, and though drummer Richard English and bassist Mike Ivins have been known to indulge, they avoid heavy doses

use during band work. Coyne does admit, though, that his tastes were largely molded by his "totally-wigged-out-on-drugs" elder brothers' record collections. The Flaming Lips is a 20-minute Tommy medley live. They also

cover Zepplin's "Communication Breakdown" back-to-back with Sonic Youth's "Death Valley '69."

In fact, *Hear II Is* seems to bear a fairly striking Sonic Youth structured-whilst-clamer influence, especially in

songs like "She Is Death," "Jesus Shooting Heroin," and "Charlie Manson Blues." But Wayne says any resemblance is merely coincidental; he discusses "Jesus Shooting Heroin" as a study in good and evil and says the Manson tune is about how "everybody could be capable of wanting to thrash somebody just to see what it was like, which seemed like a real cool thing to examine." Besides, he says, Sonic Youth are "real wimps who can't get away from doing things that they knew people are gonna like." He also says Henry Rollins "is getting fat." Pussy Galore "is, like, the worst band," and that the guy from Dr. Hook who wears the patch over his eye (who the Lips saw shooting pool in Nashville) "was drunk off his ass, and he's stupid."

Speaking of billiards, Coyne admits the light-socket-haired Flaming Lips aren't the best pluck-sinkers, "but we play 'em we can look tough, and we don't let the balls go in the holes, and we scratch a lot, because that makes the game last longer. You get more for your quarter that way." If you don't yearn for mind-burnt meaning-of-life declamations from somebody with that kind of flawless logic, I'd venture you just ain't an inquiring mind.

—Chuck Eddy

## FLAMING LIPS DENY IT ALL



Monica Day

Flaming Lips, L-R: Mike Ivins, Richard English, Wayne Coyne.



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## WORLD BEAT

### Pato Banton And Tippa Irie Inna Deejay Style

In the UK, reggae belongs to the DJ dance-hall artists, not the singers. "For a good while, MCs just took over the market," explains 24-year-old DJ Pato Banton, a protégé of General Public's Ranking Roger. "It's like a new wave. MCs can say a lot more in a lyric than what a singer says. We've just got three minutes, and we don't stop, we don't repeat anything. It's like an MC war. Lyrics tell who's going to keep carrying the swing."

The two prime UK dance-hall systems these days are Saxon (with DJs Sandy Rusty, Tippa Irie, Daddy Colonel, and Papa Levi) and Sir Coxsone in Birmingham (home to toasters Pato, Screamie, Bkey, Levi Roots, and Tenor Fly). Saxon is responsible for popularizing the trend known as speed rapping. Explains 20-year-old Tippa Irie, "It actually began in London with a youth named Peter King, but he never put it on record. Papa Levi did it first on wax with 'Mi God Mi King.' Peter's style went, 'We sweet, me neat, me know fa do it.' From there, Levi and Smiley Culture took it up, then I broke out and reached Jamaica."

Tippa and Pato have each had crossover successes on the UK pop charts, rapping chatty lyrics with a particularly English slant. Pato's smash, "Allo Tash," comes right off a British television commercial for Toshiba products. "First time I performed it," he recalls, "was at this massive show at the Lyceum in London. It took me about 25 minutes to do a three-minute song, 'cause I came onstage and said, 'Allo Tash, got a Toshiba?' and the place just erupted! Every time I did another two lines, I'd get a standing ovation."

Both Tippa and Pato share a manager, ET, who arranged a showdown "dash" between the two. Pato recalls, "What Tippa was doing in London, I was doing up in Birmingham. So when we finally had our dash, it went so beautiful. We was telling each other off, but still complimenting each other. Then at the end of the dance, we did a combination that we had written undercover with nobody knowing, and the whole place went crazy. It was called 'What's the Key to Success,' and it went, 'You wake up in the morning you think you progress/Don't walk round the house if you couldn't care less/Then one day you'll be the boss/And one day you'll be the best.'"

"I like my lyrics to be just flowing," observes Pato. "There's so many words. You've got to make sure that every one rings and that the humor comes over as well as the point you're trying to get to, so it's very technical. We have a wider vocabulary, because we come from England. We've got nuff words to choose from."

**NEWS AND NOTES:** Sam Brownell, founder and lead singer of the Chantells, was shot dead in Kingston recently while taking part in an attempted robbery of the Central Banknote Plant offices. His group had hits with "Eva," "Waiting in the Park," and "Effort in Yourself." . . . Georgie, who cooked the communal porridge in Bob Marley's "No Woman No Cry," is now in permanent residence on the grounds of the Marley Museum in Kingston and available for reminiscences with the hordes of tourists who have been flocking there since May. . . . Till next time, Jah Love, everyone. —Roger Steffens

Above: Tippa Irie prepares to signal a touchdown.

## AFTER THE BALL

### Crime And The City Solution Survive The Birthday Party

Yeah, it's inevitable that the multitudes will compare Crime and the City Solution to evolutionary antecedent the Birthday Party. And it's equally inevitable that the boys in the band are gonna get pissed off about it. So, what say we get it over with, so we can move on to more germane matters, okay?

While Aussie-born/Europe-based Crime and the City Solution does retain a couple of vestigial organs from its extinct progenitor—specifically guitarist/keyboardist/one-time drummer Mick Harvey (also doing time in Nick Cave's Bad Seeds), and guitarist Rowland D. Howard—the current beast is definitely of a new species. If we consider tar-pit-spawned/trash-can-bred Birthday Party a frantic, fire-spitting vampire bat, then the Solution is a slow-moving ground-dweller roaming through the swamp; less incendiary and ferocious perhaps, but no less lethal in its seductively devious mode of attack.

"This is something that *always* happens to new groups," says Howard, in a slightly nasal, unmistakably antipodean accent. Sitting in a crowded Greenwich Village coffee shop, he seems only partially recovered from his previous night's chameleonic impersonation of a cornered anorexic ferret. "Like," he continues, "for the first two years the Birthday Party were in England, we were seen as being derivative of all these other groups. Then, all of a sudden, we were this really *original* band. I think it will become evident, particularly with the release of the new album, that this group is *nothing like* the Birthday Party."

Well, I ain't so sure I'd go *that far*—as Howard himself concedes when pressed. Actually, Crime sounds more like a mutant crossbreed of the B.P. and the Doors; as if hunks of hallucinogen-soaked germ-plasm had been snipped from the hall-walking guy in "The End" and dropped to root in singer Simon

Bonney's zip-stripped throat (with perhaps some stray Television and Magic Band DNA wandering in as well). But however sizable, the gulf that separates this band from its forerunners is moot next to the yawning chasm between its own infancy and adolescence. Crime's three vinyl releases—"The Dangling Man" and "Just South of Heaven" EPs from '85, and spring '86's "Kentucky Click" 12-inch—sound tame and tentative compared to the feverish, introverted intensity the band exhibits onstage.

"We've only just now reached what we think we *should* sound like," says Bonney, who this morning only vaguely resembles the *Hullabaloo* dancer on Romilar who'd frugged in slo-mo to his own drummer in front of the band the night before.

Though only together as a band for something shy of two years, Crime go back much farther. To early '78 in Melbourne, in fact, when another version of Crime backed Bonney, and a Precambrian Birthday Party was just beginning to sharpen its fangs. "It was a really exciting scene," Howard says. How's that? Younger brother Harry, the band's bassist, explains, "There was just a tremendous amount of energy. At first, you felt like you were the only group in the world doing what you were doing, and that gave you a tremendous feeling of isolation—and then, suddenly, you met all these other bands with very similar aims. It was incredible."

Like mammals among the dinosaurs, these guys look forward eagerly to their ascendancy. A new LP should be out within the next couple of months, and maybe then the tired old B—P—comparisons will become extinct. Bonney says, "I'm just glad we're not someone like Hank Williams, Jr., who has to carry his ghost around with him." Amen.

—Lou Stathis







# FLASHES

**Put it in the want ads.** Answering the call of God and three million supporters, **political theorist** Pat Robertson has abdicated his seat as host of the popular sitcom, the *700 Club*, leaving aspiring veejays with the job opportunity of a lifetime. Qualifications: must be committed, sincere, and an expert on pop culture. Test: name the three albums reviewed in this issue that contain **Satanic** or **necrophilic** messages.

**Banned!** Folk revivalists the Beastie Boys are now **banned worldwide** from Holiday Inns. Seems the boys were given rooms on top of one another, and they **drilled a hole** in the floor to pass things up and down on a rope.

Time to re-evaluate mild-mannered proto-nerd **William Bennett**, secretary of education. Back when he was a graduate student at the University of Texas, our man in Washington went on a blind date with songbird Janis Joplin. He says they "sat under the Texas sky, talked, and had a couple of beers." Yeah **right**. Billy Bennett, whacha got innit?

In the international trade deal of the season, the India-based Minerals and Metals Trading Corp. will send Hindi film soundtrack cassettes to Bulgaria in exchange for fertilizer. **What a lot of shit.**

## YAKETY YAKS

"The view I have is that we only have one president for the moment, and I think every American should be behind him."  
—Belinda Carlisle

"We used to joke about kids finding a Beatles album and saying, 'Hey look, Paul was in a band before Wings.' Now I'm starting to get fans who are too young to remember Wings."  
—Paul McCartney

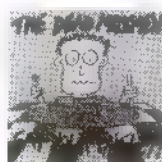
"I'm very, very sorry."  
—Convicted spy Jerry Whitworth after being sentenced to 365 years in prison and fined \$410,000.

"The whole idea of that is a little ironic, a little laughable. That someone could do this and actually make a career out of it..."  
—David Lee Roth on his life in show biz

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# SWEET EXCESS

For Sid and Nancy there was no more exciting way to be young than to die before they grew up.

**P**ure energy. There's something evil about it. But irresistible. It doesn't care. It's self-sufficient. It dances. A burning building. A storm. The Sex Pistols were like subatomic particles, like electrons; you couldn't really know about them—if you knew their velocity you couldn't know where they were, and if you could determine their positions you couldn't know how fast they were moving.

They were demonic—in that it's demonic to be presented with real life, which is half death. I remember when I had a band, when we were at our best, a brilliant set, but playing for people who didn't know us. I felt the audience was like the crowd gathered at a car wreck, that to them I was some kind of fascinating, horrifying exhibit. The Pistols were like that. That's a lot of why they broke up—it's not a comfortable way to feel. But it's also what made them spectacular—they made people question their whole lives.

The Sid and Nancy story is only one small slice of all the life of that time. I saw the movie the other day and it was depressing. It reminded me that I'm glad to have outgrown those days. But they sure were exciting. I can't think of a better way to have been that young.

Of course, every other person has o.d.'d or burned himself out, but that's rock 'n' roll. It's lousy with stories like Sid's. Brian Jones is probably the famous case that's most similar: drugged out, dropped from the Stones, and dead. Both were performers who designated themselves—and were wildly encouraged by their fans to be—absolutely free, no restraints, in playing out their drives and destiny. Sid was unique in that that was his only distinction—his only talent was for self-indulgence and destruction.

But Sid did alright for himself. He grew up in council housing—the same kind of oppressive lower middle class hatchery as the Queens projects that produced the Ramones—and he had no father, no skill, no future. Rock 'n' roll has always been for people who don't have any choice. Malcolm McLaren and Johnny Lydon and the media gave Sid a license to destroy, which is about the best toy a kid who never had anything could want.

However, one does resent the people who die. It's as if right in the middle of telling you a good story, somebody says, "Never mind. It's too private." But the Sid and Nancy story really isn't a secret. We want people to push themselves to the limit for us, so we can identify with them and imagine we've lived. People who die rather than adjust to the demands of life form a secret society—in dark hours you wonder if maybe

they were right. If they've left you behind, eating their dust.

I knew Nancy in New York in, I guess it was, 1976. Right before she went to England. I went out with her for a few months.

She was a fairly typical suburban girl who'd never fit in and worshipped rock stars (I remember the Bad Company posters in her apartment). She had left school as soon as she could to come to the big city. She had an exceptionally large drive to be where the action was. She claimed this ridiculously high IQ score. It was her way of trying to distinguish herself from the crowd of other girls very much like her that hung out at CBGB's and Max's Kansas City. It was how she made herself feel special to herself. (In a way, you'd have to be especially dumb to believe such a claim despite all the evidence to the contrary.) Like many girls of the period, she made money go-go dancing naked in Times Square sex bars.

The New York scene that Nancy departed shortly thereafter was a little more battered and knowing than what she'd find in London. Malcolm had come through a year earlier and picked up a lot of ideas he was going to impart to the bands he would be nurturing in London. But the scene here was different from what would develop there. It was a little more eclectic and intellectual, but it was just as brand-new, brilliant, real, and honest. Most of us were in our early 20s rather than late teens. People did tend to be "cool." We had our share of headbangers, but there were just as many in the crowds at CBGB's who came to be privately transported by the musings of groups like Television, Patti Smith, and the Voidoids. The Ramones and the Heartbreakers were the most aggressive (and they were to have the largest influence on Sid: his favorite rock stars were Dee Dee Ramone and Johnny Thunders). The crowds at CBGB's and Max's were made up of junkies, prostitutes, young artists, homosexual career nightclubbers, and slumming socialites. Just about everybody'd knocked around a little bit.

If you were in a band, there was always someone willing to buy you a drink and a hamburger, and there was always someone new to go home with if you wanted to. And we were at that age where we could do no wrong, because we were doing everything for the first time. Anything is worth doing once, and the harmful effects of even the most dangerous activities usually take a while to show up.

CBGB's was ramshackle and nondescript. Before we arrived it had been a Hell's Angels bar and, being located on the Bowery, likely also to harbor a few half-



Eber Roberts

Article by Richard Hell





dead old winos. The owner, Hilly, a slow, bearded, friendly old guy, drank there himself and was partial to country music (CBGB stood for Country, Blue Grass & Blues). The place smelled like shit because Hilly never walked the two dogs he kept on the premises. Over the next few years it would acquire some amenities—dressing rooms, a stage, a sound system—but when we first started playing there, it was an anonymous dive.

I really thought it was funny that the moment you played in a band you became handsome and desirable. Girls would fight over you, and the funny thing was, they liked you to be mean to them. I don't mean sadistic, but they thought band members were the coolest people in the world, and they didn't respect you unless you proved it by using them for sex, money (these were girls who made up to \$200–\$300 a night—a lot more than us—"dancing" in Times Square), decoration, and target practice, and most of us were happy to oblige. Schoolgirls and socialites were a little different, but not much. I wrote a song about it back then—Johnny Thunders wrote the music—called "Hurt Me":

*Their eyes light up when you put them down  
Heartbeat increases when you push them around  
Spill a drink on her she's your friend for life  
You can carve out a disciple if you have a knife*

Of course these girls weren't entirely passive. There had to be a fair exchange. There was a limit to the amount of abuse they'd take. There was a famous girl named Connie who cut (New York Doll) Killer Kane's thumb nearly off, and when she was going out with Dee Dee Ramone, stabbed him in the butt. Most of us were out for kicks, and we expected a few bruises. It was all pretty humorous.

Nancy just wanted to be somebody (not necessarily herself). And you've got to hand it to her, she made it. She'd love that her name could be half a movie title and that we'd know right off who it was (though she'd know it wouldn't work without Sid's). But then she'd hate the lumpy face of the actress who plays her.

She would do absolutely anything to get what she wanted, but her arsenal of persuasive means was limited. When I told her I didn't want to see her anymore, she started crying and pleading, pulled off her panties, lifted her skirt, bent over, and swore she'd do anything

**The moment you played in a band you became handsome and desirable. Girls would fight over you. The funny thing was, they liked you to be mean to them. They didn't respect you unless you used them.**



I asked. It was not too attractive. There was really nothing between us.

The Sex Pistols were really something, though. I keep thinking how pure they were, an impenetrable phenomenon, like a mirror, or any given moment. Like life. They brought life back to rock 'n' roll. To write about them is to reveal yourself.

They were pure chaos. Like watching a storm. Matter releasing its energy. To touch them was to burn or get burned, but they were so compelling, so tempting, so fascinating to watch. They weren't human, but it was a kind of inhumanity I understand, and a neglected teenager needs. They were the definition of white rock 'n' roll.

Mainly a teenager wants to be heard, to make his presence felt. He sees how monstrous the world is behind its polite manners, and he resents being ignored and condescended to by such hypocrites. So he drops the manners and reflects the truth, which is to say he makes a monster of himself. Utterly exhilarating. The problem is that when it happens to you, like it did to Sid, when it's done naively, you're still allowing yourself to be defined and controlled by the society you're "defying," and unless you can grow up before you die, your destiny will be to self-destruct in some sort of misbegotten, half-conscious protest against it.

It reminds me of the night James Chance—another crazy, inspired musician of the period—was furious because the mob proprietors of some New York disco refused to pay him after a gig. Chance stalked around the huge, darkened dance floor in a fury, cursing. The room was empty except for a muscle-bound bouncer and James and me. When James started kicking beer bottles, the bouncer began to approach him. James picked up a bottle by the neck, smashed it against a pillar, and screamed at the guy, "You can't hurt me." Then he jammed the broken bottle into his own chest.

It's a weird syndrome of the powerless saying to the powerful, "You can't hurt me because I'm willing to hurt myself."

Of course, Lydon and Malcolm were not such lost souls. Neither of them is done justice by the movie. To be fair, the movie isn't their story, though it is virtually a docudrama. But Malcolm wasn't the sort of cynical character it makes him out to be. Malcolm was having fun. He was shaking things up and making art. The mass media was his art form and he was a master of its properties. He was also quite honest, I think, and very politically sophisticated, which is to say thoughtful and consistent in dealing with people. He was something of a megalomaniac where his work was concerned, but an artist has to be. He was a lot like Warhol (or Picasso for that matter) in that he took ideas wherever he could find them. But ideas aren't property, nobody owns them. They belong to whomever makes the best use of them. His collaborators in the Sex Pistols were eager volunteers, not captive victims.

I remember once talking to Johnny Thunders (probably the most unacknowledged legislator of rock 'n' roll) about how sleazy rock life is, and he came up with the best characterization of it I ever heard. He compared it to professional boxing, with its sleazy, incompetent managers, gangster promoters, and other duplicitous parasites who live off the blood of the performers, performers who are likely to end up punch-drunk burnouts, while the owners get rich, but whose only other choices in life are jail or a cubicle in social hell. Malcolm was as far as could be from such sinister managerial types. He was an extension of the band. Without his energy, commitment, and brilliant strategy, they never could have approached the position they reached.

He understood rock 'n' roll, too—that its essence is that it's made by and for kids. It's not about virtuosity—it's about energy, passion, frustration, lust, and fun.

Above: The boys in the band (L-R) Sid, Johnny, and Steve Jones. Bottom: Sid, who got the best toy a poor kid could receive—the power to destroy himself.





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Not to mention drugs. Teenage life. Life and life only. The Sex Pistols were, first, true to life. That's how they burned through the newspapers and the TV tubes to the kids, because the kids, whether they knew it beforehand or not, were sick of the self-important, posing, old, and isolated rock-emperors of the time.

The Sex Pistols had no pretensions. They'd only just learned how to operate their instruments. But they operated as one, with a common intention that was shared by half the youth of London. That intention was just to have some fun, for once, just to make something happen. Despite grown-ups. They created an atmosphere where kids could be themselves, despite everything.

Things were (and still are) bad for kids in England. Every year, literally hundreds of thousands of them went directly from school onto the dole. There were no jobs. The welfare state was a listless, pathetic failure. The streets were ugly with bored and hungry kids.

So London was ripe to the point of rotten. Enter Johnny, who, like Malcolm, is not well served by Sid & Nancy. Rotten was heroic for his absolutely scrupulous refusal to ever promote anything but general chaos. It was just his nature. He was like some mythological imp, the imp of the perverse, who just liked to rub you the wrong way.

At the first date my band, the Voidoids, played in London, 1977, Rotten came on stage after the set and harangued the audience into forcing us, with ten minutes of applause, to return for an encore. I'd never met him. Then when he came backstage later, the first thing he said to me was, "God, you've got a big nose." He was definitely into one-upmanship, but you had to admire him. All the kids in London did, because he didn't give a fuck, even about that. He just hated anything conventional, and he was funny and street-smart. He was one of them, and he was a concentrated package of the part of each of them they'd been least able to express. He gave it release, and they really loved him for it. All those bands, from the Clash to

**Nancy just wanted to be somebody. She'd love that her name could be half a movie title. But then she'd hate the lumpy face of the actress who plays her.**

Generation X (Billy Idol) to even Duran Duran, freely, publicly, admit that he—or the Sex Pistols—was directly responsible for inspiring them. This kind of acknowledgment is very unusual among members of essentially the same generation in such a competitive and egotistical business as rock music.

That's something that's missing from the movie—a sense of the emotional commitment and loyalty the kids had to each other. (It was true in New York, too.) Things were shared and people helped each other. It wasn't sentimental. They were a hard lot, for all their youth, but they believed in each other and their common worth in the face of the contempt and indifference of adults. (Everyone was much younger than they're portrayed in the movie.)

The scene that erupted in London was single-minded, or singularly mindless. The New York scene that Malcolm had studied (when he was here managing the Dolls in the declining days) was more diffuse and varied, with all the innovations present (from torn, scribbled-on, and safety-pinned clothes to spiky short hair to short, hard, loud, obnoxious songs) but not exclusively in any one group. In London it all gushed outward from Malcolm and the Pistols, and the audience was 90 percent crazed kids with nothing to do. The kids weren't cool, they were boiling hot. They spit and hit and cursed. Perfect turf for Nancy.

The movie does succeed on its own terms in accurately capturing the style and attitudes of its two principles. I've never seen a film that comes near it for conveying the growing desperation and shrinking prospects of the heroin addict. Director Alex Cox knows his stuff. You could fault Chloe Webb as Nancy for overdoing the facial contortions and tongue lolling, but apart from that, the impersonations she and Gary Oldman (Sid) achieve are remarkably convincing, as is the content of the individual scenes. Everyone obviously did their research. One could wish that the social structure and its values (rather than Malcolm or John) could have been implicated some for the depressing fate suffered by Sid and his girl. Because it was fate. Sid's whole identity was self-destruction. He was famous for dying. It's all he knew how to do. He didn't have a clue. (But then, who does?)



Above, Nancy (right) and Debbie Harry. Right, Sid in one of many meaningful discussions he would have with the cops, especially after Nancy was found murdered in his hotel room.





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# SPINS

John Fogerty, 'til  
tuesday, Sparks, Nick  
Drake, Jimmy  
Witherspoon, Huey  
Lewis, Elvis Costello,  
Red Wave, Paul  
McCartney, Frank  
Sinatra, Don Johnson,  
Philip-Michael  
Thomas, B-52's,  
Georgia Satellites

Edited by  
Glenn O'Brien



Ross Manno

## Platter du Jour

**John Fogerty**  
*Eye of the Zombie*  
Warner Bros.

*Centerfield*, John Fogerty's tour-de-force, was more remarkable for its sales than for its music. Playing all the instruments and singing all the parts, Fogerty was able to recreate and recapture the feel and the sound of Creedence Clearwater, and if some of the playing was mechanical and some of the songs a bit forced, it was good to have him back, good to know that his spirit was still there. Even in his absence he had cast a long shadow.

*Centerfield* was a respectable comeback, but *Eye Of The Zombie* is a whole new ball game. Playing with a handful of choice musicians (ex-Rufus drummer John Robinson, bass player Neil Stebenhaus, and gospel/R & B vocalists Bobby King, Willie Green, Jr., and Terry Evans), Fogerty has crafted the strongest, most passionate record of his career. Instead of referring back to Creedence, Fogerty has gone back further, back to the music that originally inspired him, that made him want to play in the first place: the gospel edge of The Swan Silvertones, Ray Charles's wail and moan, the chug of Roy Head, and the relentless surge of The Meters, while at the same time keeping a close eye on the way ZZ Top, The Fabulous Thunderbirds, and Robert Cray have propelled blues into the '80s (and onto the radio).

Essentially, for the first time since, oh, *Cosmo's Factory* in 1970, Fogerty has found his center, his tone.

And in blues and in soul, tone is everything; it gets you on the bus and takes you to your door, it's the musical equivalent of "the buck stops here." When you've got it, you've got everything; and when you haven't got it, nothing else you've got can make up for it. You hear it in the very first note of any record by Sam Cooke or Otis Redding or Bob Marley or Billie Holiday or Hank Williams or, for that matter, The Beatles. From the first note, the world stops and doesn't start spinning again until the record is over. Call it tone or call it magic, but all those artists made great records and made lame records, and you can tell which is which in the first note, in the very first second. When you've got it, you're protected—you can sing off-key, you can forget the words, you can fall down on the floor and start foaming at the mouth, and it doesn't matter a bit, because we're no longer talking about notes or about music but about the force, the spirit behind music, the very thing that makes music itself possible.

And that's the arena we're dealing with here: it's all or nothing time, and damn if this record isn't pretty close to all. Fogerty's singing is as committed as ever, but it's more open, more expansive than it's ever been; he still bites his words, like a hungry man devouring a sandwich, but he takes bigger bites and chews more before he swallows. And his guitar, never really his strongest suit, has become almost as eloquent as his voice. Fogerty was always a great rhythm player, knowing how to cut against the backbeat, knowing when to lean back and when to pounce, but his solos often had more spirit than actual authority. Here his sound is grittier, but far more powerful; playing with this rhythm section has given him more confidence, but it has also inspired him, and much of the playing sounds live, unleashed, with the attack of Albert King, the fire of Eric Clapton (circa "Strange Brew"), and the edgy way of playing tag with the lyrics that recalls a slightly more Delta-fied Richard Thompson.

The record opens with "Goin' Back Home," a sparse instrumental that seems, at first, out of place.

Sampled voices are played on a keyboard in a somber hymn, recalling the choir that opens "You Can't Always Get What You Want," until they're pushed back by a lone, singing guitar, stark and solitary, playing what seems at once a dirge and a call to arms. Which is, of course, what it is. It exorcises the past while paving the way for the record at hand. Fogerty is nothing if not mythic. Then "Eye Of The Zombie" leaps out, a ferocious song of menace and terror, "Run Through The Jungle" gone voodoo:

*Shadows on the mountain  
And the night begins to fall  
Gather up the children  
'Fore darkness takes us all  
Tribe has come together  
Standin' naked against the night  
Twenty feet from the fire  
The evil waits with zombie eyes*

The music is denser than anything he's recorded before, swampy and dark, with thick hoodooed voices wrapped around Fogerty's, and the pulse is almost unbearable, unstoppable, like dance music from a roadhouse somewhere on the moon.

"Headlines" is a sneaky blues number pushed up-tempo and served no-frills, the way ZZ Top used to pull great slippery blues out of their beards and bring them back to life. "Knockin' On Your Door" is a love song that feels right out of the old Stax/Volt catalog, the sort of effortless R&B that Eddie Floyd or Mel & Tim used to sing:

*Here I'm standin' out in the rain  
With a heart full of pain  
Baby here I am  
Knockin' on your door*

It's a yearning, open-hearted song, and, to the best of my knowledge, the first love song Fogerty's ever written and recorded. (You can count "Long As I Can See The Light" if you want, but that's more a song of faith and commitment. Same thing, maybe.)

"Change In The Weather" brings back the menace



Karen Eiler

of "Eye Of The Zombie" for a gospel-driven song on the nation's dark mood and darker future:

*Down on your knees  
Go ahead and pray  
But every demon  
Has to have his day*

Here, Fogerty's at his best, jumping into the middle of a scene with the cameras rolling, picking up bits of light, picking up bits of dark. When he tries to explain too much, as in "Violence Is Golden," a song about the greed and machismo that fuels the arms race, he can grow dense and didactic, but the song is carried by the sound and the strength of the music, with the chorus a throbbing thermonuclear fusion of "Born Under A Bad Sign" and "Purple Haze."

"Wasn't That A Woman" and "Soda Pop" are groove things, pure and simple, strutting and reveling in their hip-shake and style. "Wasn't That A Woman" ("Wasn't that a women/uh huh pure Cadillac") is the slyer of the two, recalling the Staples Singers' "I'll Take You There" mixed with a dash of Trouble Funk. "Soda Pop," a song about corporate sponsorship and selling out, is more of a street-corner chant done up

as a badass nursery rhyme:

*Soda pop  
Soda pop  
Everybody wants to make it  
To the top*

The album closes with "Sail Away," a song of yearning and release, of leaving the greed, the zombies, and the hustlers for something more, a gospel song with the power and the open-heartedness of

■ Sam Cooke plea:

*Mama come look quick  
Do I see an open door  
The passageway is lit  
And it's time to get on board*

The song is unlike anything Fogerty has written before, as tough and as present-sounding as anything on the radio, while rooted in traditions at once older and richer than radio or records:

*Leavin' all of this pain behind  
Gonna sail away  
Lettin' all of these chains unwind  
Gonna fly away*

Even after all the records and all the lawsuits and all the years away, this sounds like the work of a man at the beginning of his career.

—Brian Cullman

## 'til tuesday Welcome Home Epic

The wonder of *Welcome Home* is not that 'til tuesday has eluded the second-record jinx, but that it's so richly rendered that it could be their *third* album. The enticing spookiness of the first pass has been preserved but broadened, so that a sound that initially evoked a haunted choir loft now encompasses the cathedral and the woods beyond.

What made 'til tuesday's debut album so appealing was its succinct sense of pop insight into concepts like lovesick isolation and romantic claustrophobia. "Voices Carry" and "Love in a Vacuum" were beautifully constructed intuitions, like specters glimpsed out of the corner of one's eye that steadily grow more real even as you hesitate to face them. The group built a tensile framework around Aimee Mann's throaty/ethereal chants that was suggestive of Roxy Music circa *Flesh + Blood*. So it's intriguingly fitting that Rhett Davies, who coproduced the best of latter-day Roxy and Bryan Ferry, signed on to help one of America's best new bands make this crucial follow-up.

There's a strong first single in "What About Love," a troubled reverie, anchored by Mann's dusky vocals, that builds to a nicely bittersweet guitar break. But it's the least original of *Welcome Home*'s ten tracks, especially when contrasted with the wistfully atmospheric folk-rock "Coming Up Close"—a sort of New England equivalent of Don Henley's "The Boys of Summer"—or the exquisitely eerie "Lovers' Day" and "No One Is Watching You Now."

Mann writes taut yet warmly ironic songs that succeed for their keen subtleties. They would not work, however, without the articulate instrumentation. Rarely have one guitarist, one drummer, and one set of keyboards sounded more inventive and even eloquent in the support of a singer's fragile vision.

On "Sleeping and Waking," Mann's ghostly voice assures you that ending any potent illusion "is the hardest thing to do," and *Welcome Home* makes her latest dreams difficult to leave. Or forget.

—Timothy White

'til tuesday (L-R): Robert Holmes, Aimee Mann, Joey Pesce, Michael Hausman.



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## Sparks

*Music That You Can Dance To*  
MCA

Let's see . . . Sparks. To be perfectly honest, they never meant a hell of a lot to me. I mean, I seem to remember them from years ago—two brothers, one supposedly "weird," the other "pretty," who played pop music. Every so often I hear a catchy song and discover it's by Sparks. I know they have had their occasional hits, that the title song of this album is currently a big club record in London, but basically I remember the look of the duo more than the material performed. They even had a song in one of my favorite movies, *Fright Night*; and when I saw their name in the closing credits, I still couldn't remember what their contribution to the score sounded like. I've seen the movie five times. I'm telling you all this just so you understand that I approached their new album, *Music That You Can Dance To*, with absolutely no prejudice, pro or con—that's how little they meant to me. That's also the way any piece of music should be approached, in my opinion—as an immediate emotional impression.

Which is pretty much what the first, and title, cut goes on about. To a pounding techno beat:

*Music that you can dance to*

*That and that alone is enough for me*  
So, I guess we're all on the same wavelength, the Maels and myself, that is. In spite of its aforementioned success in England, this song is stiff, mildly irritating, and musically dated by about five to six years. The high point of the song is the beat. The low point is the lame rap. The darker side of white dance music.

"Rosebud" follows with a promising beginning, sounding incredibly like Marianne Faithfull's "Why'd You Do It?" over which a female wails (a fan, perhaps?) like an outtake from Pink Floyd's "Great Gig in the Sky." Russell Mael then dramatically goes on about Lord knows what. It's all too deep for me. Very *film noir*, I think. "Fingertips" comes next. I laughed, thinking that it would be funny if it was the Stevie Wonder classic. I laughed even harder when I discovered that's exactly what it is. It reminds me of Mrs. Miller, which is the nicest compliment I can give it. Absolutely horrible.

Side two: "The Scene." Imagine bad Soft Cell at their most frantic. I heartily apologize to Marc Almond. He would never write lyrics as trite as these. We are then dragged right into "Shopping Mail of Love." Wait . . . it's WONDERFUL! The words, delivery, and musical simplicity are all completely right. I love this song! James Bond territory is explored next in "Modesty Plays" (sounds like Modesty Blaise). I owe Bond an apology because this is closer to the theme for some grade B Italian spy thriller—more forgettable than Duran Duran's pathetic try at the real thing.

It doesn't take much to understand Sparks' sense of humor, but that just isn't enough to make up for the lack of anything else. I know that at one time they were considered rather avant-garde, but now they seem stuck in the technopop of years past. Depeche Mode is a band of this ilk that has worn well. What we have here is white bread with mayo, untoasted, but with a lot of bologna. In other words, aural lunchmeat.

—Anita Sarko

## Nick Drake

*Fruit Tree*  
Carthage

Nick Drake was a desperately depressed young Englishman who made three LPs of fragile and ghostly songs in the early '70s before taking an overdose of a drug a psychiatrist had prescribed. In his songs you hear the immediate emotional aftermath of hippie-ism and the kind of "sensitivity" that would later be turned into a bad joke by the likes of James Taylor.

*Fruit Tree* is a boxed set of four records: Drake's Island Records releases, *Five Leaves Left*, *Bryter Layter*, and *Pink Moon*, and a fourth LP of unreleased material. The whole thing is a trip from the precious adolescent self-pity of Drake's first record (*Five Leaves Left*) to the amazingly stark and serene despair of his last (*Pink Moon*). *Five Leaves Left* begins with a tune ("Time Has Told Me") that wouldn't have been out of place on the first few Jackson Browne records. *Five Leaves Left* has some lovely music (as all of these records do). It also has some tacky arrangements and some cutesy teenage evocations of loss and nostalgia—whining with strings.

*Pink Moon* begins with a song ("Pink Moon") that goes completely beyond the singer-songwriter woe-is-me jazz that Drake seems to have invented a few years before it translated into big bucks for Browne, Taylor, et al. *Pink Moon* is whining without strings, despair without self-pity, depression that turns into a kind of delight. Drake sounds filled with the joy of imminent destruction, like those polite and cheerful Jehovah's Witnesses distributing upbeat literature about Armageddon coming soon to a planet near you, singing in a whisper: "I saw it written/And I saw it say/Pink moon is on its way/None of you shall stand so tall/Pink moon gonna get you all." This is how John the Baptist may have sounded as he paraded around Galilee announcing that the Messiah was due and it would soon be curtains

for sinners. Artistically at least, Drake was able to do something interesting with his depression; he turned it inside out, he wasn't depressed, the world was.

In between *Five Leaves Left* and *Pink Moon*, Drake made *Bryter Layter*, which sounds almost ecstatic in comparison with the rest of his work. It also has a very beautiful and kind of hopeful song on it, "Northern Sky," on which Drake is ably assisted by John Cale on piano, organ, and celeste.

Nick Drake appears to have been the kind of character who has cropped up in a lot of bad operas, novels, and soaps over the last few centuries: he's the sensitive young man (maybe gay) who grows more beautiful as he becomes more hopeless. He pines for love unrequited, suffering a melancholy disease that makes his skin increasingly shiny and translucent until finally he expires of shimmering loveliness.

Drake was so depressed, so passive and indecisive, that he's almost absent from his own songs. Singer-songwriter albums tend to be exercises in grotesque egomania: "Dig me and my wonderful, sensitive emotions." Drake called attention to an ego that wasn't there; he put a spotlight on himself and then disappeared.

What commends Drake's music is the precision with which he described the weariness that only young failures can feel; he felt like an old man the way only young men can. In the '60s, guys with long hair and guitars failed to transform the world into someplace substantially more beautiful. In the '70s, Nick Drake saw the collapse of his own airy dreams and poetic pretensions. Years later those dreams can still be heard crashing to earth.

—Peter Carbonara

Left: Ron and Russell Mael of Sparks practice their apologies to Mrs. Miller, James Bond, and Marc Almond. Below: Nick Drake models the sensitivity that made Jackson Browne and James Taylor possible.





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### Jimmy Witherspoon

*Midnight Lady Called the Blues*  
Muse

Jimmy Witherspoon is mentioned in *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll* as an influence on Eric Burdon. In *The Encyclopedia of Pop, Rock, and Soul*, Jimmy is in the blank space

between the entries for Bill Withers and Stevie Wonder. But where the elite meet to wow one another with their old R&B records, Jimmy Witherspoon is a legendary singer. And, with the death of Joe Turner last year, Jimmy became the last of the great blues shouters.

Like many R&B greats, Witherspoon started out as a choirboy (in this case an Arkansas choirboy). He had many R&B

hits in the late '40s and early '50s, including the big one, "Ain't Nobody's Business," which was the No. 5 R&B record of 1949. His charting singles included "How I Hate to See X-mas Come Around," "In the Evening," "Big Fine Girl," "When the Lights Go Out," and "Drinking Beer." In the mid-'50s Jimmy was pulling in more bread than Mickey Mantle, but as the story often goes, the money went quickly on high-velocity automobiles and females. When rock 'n' roll hit, big Jimmy was reduced to gigging for \$75 a night.

But hardship may have given him a greater blues palette, and he never quit. In the '60s he traveled to Europe, where he found appreciative audiences, and he was consistently voted the No. 1 blues singer in the *Melody Maker* polls. More recently Witherspoon conquered throat cancer, which threatened his life and livelihood. And he came back strong.

Witherspoon's new album, *Midnight Lady Called the Blues*, is a beautiful piece of work, produced by two legendary doctors, Doctor John and Doc Pomus. Most of you youngsters know about Dr. John, but Doc Pomus, a true Hall of Famer, may not be a household word at your pad. Doc wrote, among others, "Teenager in Love," "Young Blood," "It's a Long, Lonely Highway," "Save the Last Dance for Me," "Turn Me Loose," and "Viva Las Vegas." This team of R&B MDs has assembled an all-star band to back Jimmy Witherspoon:

Dr. John on piano, Calvin Newborn on guitar, Wilbur Bascomb on bass, Bernard Purdie on drums, Hank Crawford on alto sax, Charlie Miller on trumpet, and David "Fathead" Newman on tenor sax. Altogether this band has about 250 years' experience with the blues, and they play the music to soulful perfection. The sax solos from Newman and Crawford are especially fine, the perfect counterpoint to the husky, tough-textured, but remarkably smooth vocals of Witherspoon.

"When you see the barber's pole," sings Jimmy, "You know the barber can't be far behind." That's "The Barber," and as for his pole, "It's like a rare antique . . . it gets better as it gets old." There are seven great songs here, all authored by Dr. John and Doc Pomus, from the easy, bluesy jazz of "Blinded by Love" to the jealous man's wit of "Something Rotten in East St. Louis" to the brooding soul power of "Midnight Lady Called the Blues."

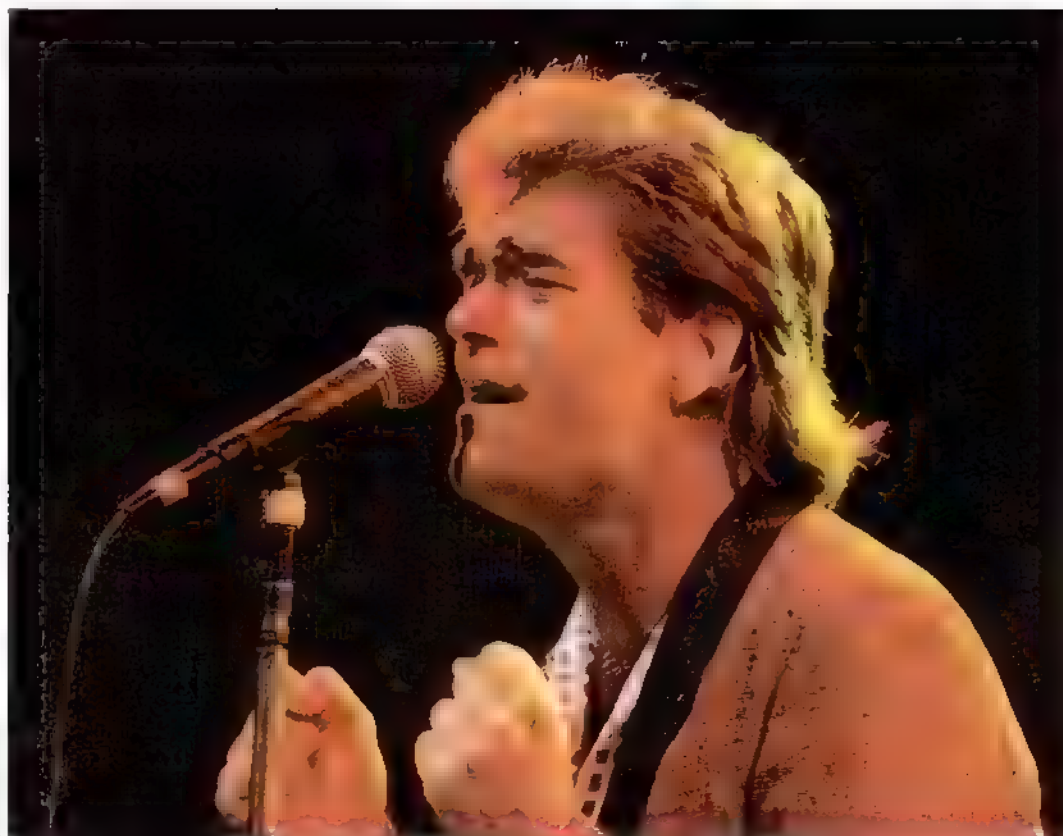
Like his barber's pole, Jimmy Witherspoon's voice and his blues craftsmanship have improved with age—and unlike many latter-day albums from blues greats, this is not an attempt to recapture past glory. It's a powerfully soulful, mature record from a singer, two songwriters, and a great band, all at the height of their achievement. If you can't find this album in your local blues bin, write Muse Records, 160 West 71st Street, New York, NY 10023.

—Glenn O'Brien

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## Huey Lewis

*Fore!*  
Chrysalis

The cover of Huey Lewis's new album shows Huey and the News casually posing in front of a stucco wall, looking like the regular guys they surely are. The album is called *Fore!* and the guy who's holding the golf club looks like the one I'd most like to play 18 with. He's the one holding the driver, wearing leather pants, wraparound shades, and *West Side Story* sideburns, smoking a cigarette. I like a golfer who doesn't look like a golfer. I figure you either go with the Ivy League cap and plus fours like Payne Stewart, or you go for the ripped jeans and Oakland Raiders T-shirt look, which is how I'm sure this guy dresses for the links. Hep.

"It's hip to be square," sings Huey, in the song that seems to sum up the metaphysics of Huey's new record, if not his entire career.

"I used to be a renegade, I used to run around... but I couldn't take the punishment and had to settle down... now I'm playing it real straight and yes I cut my hair... you might think I'm crazy but I don't even care... because I can tell what's going on..."

And you know the rest. Well, actually I tend to agree with Huey. Three squares a day, getting up early, playing some ball, and all—that's great. There's just something about coming out and

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declaring it like this that I found a little bothersome. But now I'm getting used to it. It's still not a song I go around singing on my way to the health food store. I think if I'd written it, I would have called it "Square to Be Hip." I'm not sure what the difference is, but there might be a significant one. A friend of mine, a Huey fan, already sold his copy of *Fore!* to the used record store. I know he was having the same trouble with the message. We always liked Huey being earnest. But now he's verging on blatant. I think my buddy thought Huey was pandering to the yuppies.

I guess what saves it for me is that the songs are good songs. Nice tunes. And Huey still sings with heart and soul. He's not faking it. When Dion sang "Abraham, Martin, & John" I really resisted, but in the end I was won over by the fact that it was Dion being Dion. And here we have Huey being Huey, singing his straight-time desiderata gospel. Huey's okay, I'm okay, and if u cn rd ths u r 2.

Yeah, I really dig Huey and his message of simplicity and rec-roomy post-hedonism and his whole-grain soul music. Sometimes he's like Van Halen waiting for Eddy. Sometimes he's like Gilbert O'Sullivan on steroids and heavy Nautilus.

It's funny how when some people say "performance was below par, they mean something bad, but say that to a golfer and it means A-OK. I'd say this is a subpar album; take it as you will.

—Glenn O'Brien



**Elvis Costello and the Attractions**  
*Blood & Chocolate*  
Columbia

Elvis Costello is just too goddamned smart for his own good. The boy's ear for startling turns of phrase and ironic twists on banal expressions has led him to write some of the most sublimely meaningless lyrics in human history. Submitted for your approval: lyrics from

"Tokyo Storm Warning" from El's latest, *Blood & Chocolate*. A representative couplet: "Japanese God-Jesus robots telling teenage fortunes/For all we know and all we care they might as well be Martians." I for one can't help loving this kind of stuff, but deep in my heart of hearts I know that it's just fancy footwork and really means nothing at all.

If we were so inclined, we might be tempted at this point to leap into a discussion of the weird relationship between "signified" and "signifier" or some other such semiotic claptrap about how you can never really understand what someone is trying to tell you. (This sort of thing is clearly on Elvis's mind too; the production notes for *Blood & Chocolate* are thoughtfully provided in everybody's favorite artificial language, Esperanto.) In the interest of greater understanding, however, let's pose a broader question about Costello's new record: Does it rock?

Yes, I'm happy to say, it does. After the relative mellow of his last record, *King of America*, this disc clatters and clangs along with the garage-band verve that has made Elvis and his backup band, the Attractions, the toast of skinny guys with glasses the world over. This is snide music that will no doubt provide a new generation of hapless wimps with withering comeback lines guaranteed to render all bullies speechless, if not nonviolent. In a world of bitter compromises, we can hope for little more.

The production is more stark and the Attractions less inclined to fly off on baroque tangents than usual, but *Blood & Chocolate* is at least a partial return to form for Elvis. On *King of America*, he shed his bug-eyed geek persona (even to the extent of recording under his real name, Declan Patrick MacManus) and he momentarily walked among us in human form, dispensing with his usual stock reactions of scorn and contempt in favor of such slippery sentiments as tenderness and forgiveness. A voice which had long been put to brilliant use accusing and chastising was applied to the more demanding (and less immediately gratifying) tasks of caressing and comforting. But Elvis knows this is the '80s and that "sensitive man" stuff just won't wash anymore. On *Blood & Chocolate*, we find him laying to rest any notions that he can no longer spew bile with the best of them.

Elvis (billed here inexplicably as "Napoleon Dynamite") is out there cursing and screaming, insisting "I hope you're happy now," and sarcastically wondering "What do we care if the world is a joke?" If he's more than a tad whiny and self-righteous—and he is—let's not forget that we've all had days like that, and the thing about self-righteousness is that it really feels good. Elvis gives us all the fun and entertainment of a prolonged attack of paranoid hysteria—and where else can you get that kind of value for your dollar?

To his everlasting credit, he also gives us more, like the excellent songs toward the end of side one, which climax with "Next Time Round," a truly towering fit of persecution mania with a great

## SCOTT JOHNSON

"John Somebody" mirrors the subterranean rumble, the welter of voices and other overheard sounds of the city, with the cries of superamplified guitars hovering like angels above the fray. It's a compelling marriage of rock elements and classical formalism that doesn't shortchange either." —Robert Palmer, *N.Y. Times*

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## CAETANO VELOSO

"To the Brazilian people, he is a simple country boy from Bahia, the personification of *alegría*—of letting the good times roll. But his music is anything but simple. The best songs have the harmonic sophistication and the introspective dreaminess of the work of Erik Satie or Bill Evans, and their lyrics are poetry." —*The New Yorker*

Nonesuch (79127)

## KRONOS QUARTET

"A supercharged group of musical pioneers" (*L.A. Times*) performing works by Philip Glass, Conlon Nanarrow, Aris Sallinen and Peter Scuthorpe—plus their most requested encore, Jimi Hendrix' "Purple Haze." Nonesuch (79115)

melody and a good beat. Other highlights include the easily hummable "Crimes of Paris" and "I Want You," an extended psychosexual drama that may put the listener in mind of a song with the same name John Lennon did a long time ago with the Beatles. Elvis alternates repetitions of the line "I want you" with all kinds of obscure circumlocutions. It's the sound of a man simultaneously trying to be a wise guy and telling himself to stop screwing around and just come out with it.

As usual, Elvis talks so well and so fast that it's usually impossible to guess what he's talking about; this needn't be a problem, unless you're hung up on things like "meaning." Costello is a man singing beautifully in a language that is only intermittently comprehensible; he's either speaking in tongues or babbling incoherently. Either way, groove on the invective and leave the "significance" to the rock critics.

—Peter Carbonara

### Various Artists

*Red Wave—Four Underground Bands From the USSR*  
Big Time

The guy in the White House with the funny hair may be cultivating Russophobia the way some folks do snapbeans, but it's nice to know everyone

isn't swallowing his cheap neo-Cold War scare tactics. For the past two years, 25-year-old Joanna Stingray has traveled to Leningrad to record and make videos of some of the Soviet Union's top rock 'n' roll bands and has now drawn open the Iron Curtain a little further with the release of this fascinating double album set.

The album offers a side apiece to four bands. Styles range from the wide-eyed pop of Kino and Alisa to the art-rock flirtations of Aquarium (fronted by the "father of Russian rock 'n' roll," Boris Grebenshikov) to the quirky, ska-influenced Strange Games. Of these, Strange Games is clearly the best. If some of their tunes were released in English—Russian is hardly the most mellifluous language in the world—they could undoubtedly put a dent in the charts.

Because the bands are not officially authorized by the Soviet government, they cannot receive money for their music or its performance, and it had to be smuggled out of the country. Strangely, there is little talk of the state in songs. It's mostly the same thing rockers have been singing about for 30 years: falling in love, falling out of love, what a drag it is getting old. The result is a vivid testament to the resilience of the human spirit and a solid document in favor of that greatest liberator of all: music.

—James Daly

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**Don Johnson**  
*Heartbeat*  
CBS



**Philip-Michael Thomas**  
*Living the Book of My Life*  
Atlantic

The first time ever I saw *Miami Vice*, I was astounded. I didn't get intrigued by the looks of the stars, and I thought the music was no more than a maxi-collage of MTV staples. What moved me was the editing and the mood of the show. The images were like flipbooks, and the atmosphere brought back the sub-tropical whitewashed magic of the city that claimed five years of my life. After about three episodes, I tired of the same storyline week after week, the same moods, the same quick cuts. I still didn't fantasize over the stars. I still wasn't impressed by the music. Instead, my occasional rush came from discovering friends of mine, from time to time, cast as the weekly "weird character."

I've read all the stories about the heavy egos of Johnson and Thomas. I was amused at Thomas's woman's clothing line because it was all so tacky. Next I hear that Thomas and Johnson have decided to become Rock Stars. I like that. This is in keeping with an earlier tradition that somehow got lost over the past few years—TV heartthrobs taken with the need to warble. I cherish those albums by everyone from the stars of 77 *Sunset Strip* and *Hawaiian Eye* to Festus of *Gunsmoke* (actually an original Son of the Pioneers) and the *Star Trek* crew. Classics all! I applaud this return. And, up in rock star heaven, I'm sure that the original TV pop idol, Ricky Nelson, is also applauding. And laughing.

The cover of Don Johnson's debut album looks like one from the '60s or early '70s. Remember when albums opened up and displayed beautiful mood shots of the star as well as



Courtesy of Epic Records

"candid" photos of guest musicians and famous friends (who just happened to stop by)? This album is heavily guested. We have Whoopie Goldberg, Willie Nelson, Ron Wood, Bonnie Raitt, Michael Des Barres, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Dickey Betts, and (one of my favorite new guitarists) Dweezil Zappa. There are even more guests, as well as a core group of musicians. What a crowd!

"Heartbeat," the opener, is a mid-paced AOR rocker written by Eric Kaz and featuring the core band with no guests. Johnson's voice has an almost Southern rock sound to it and is the most outstanding element here. This is definitely an above-average MTV/radio cut. Quite likeable, actually. "Voice on a Hot Line" comes second. It's occasionally rescued by a horn line from the tragic fate of ballad death due to plodding arrangement. "The Last Sound Love Makes" informs us that this sound is "the sound of a heartbreak." Johnson

*Don Johnson cops a new attitude and considers going cowboy, while Whoopie Goldberg, Willie Nelson, and Tom Petty look on (not shown).*

must be a nonsmoker. In fact, the only thing smokin' here is the lovely Dweezil's guitar solo. The ending is a huge build-up to nothing. Bonnie Raitt then joins Don on Tom Petty's "Lost in Your Eyes." By now, Johnson's voice has displayed as much texture and variety as a school lunch. Side one ends with "Coco Don't," the most likeable entry next to the opening title track. It's not nearly as good, but until Johnson hits one disastrous falsetto klunker, there's at least something more than ordinary here. (C'mon, man, give me something to write about on side two—something really nice. OK?)

We begin the second half of our journey with "Heartache Away," in which Don complains about hearing "the

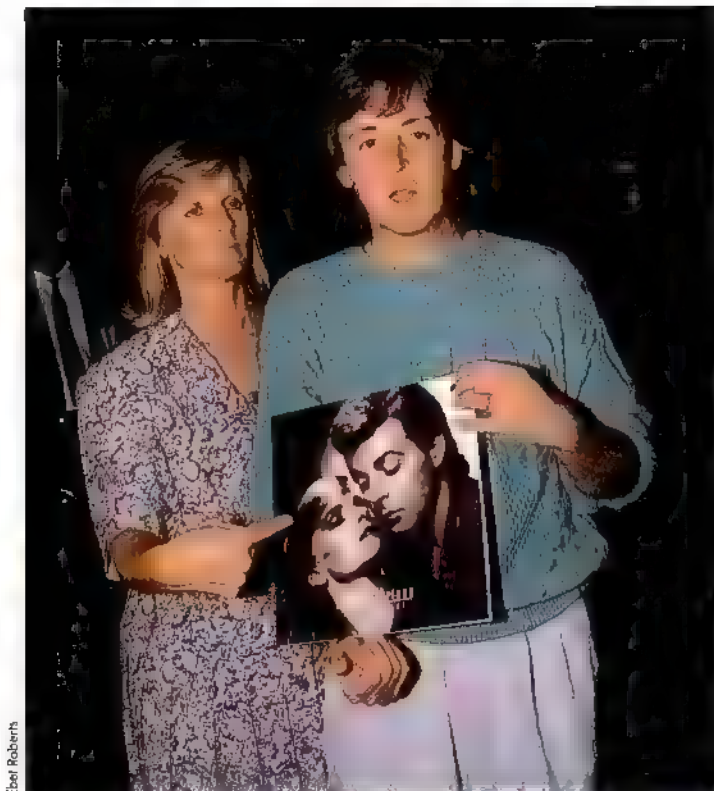
same sound." I know how he feels! Even Stevie Ray Vaughan's guitar and Bonnie Raitt's harmonizing add zilch. "Love Roulette" gives us Vaughan again, and Ron Wood providing horrible harmonies. I think someone slipped Vaughan a vitamin B12 shot between the last cut and this, so different is his energy level. With Bob Seger's "Star Tonight" we finally have a real winner. Willie Nelson is inspired on harmonies and guitar. The harmonica playing by Micky Raphael is perfect. Thank you, Don. I liked this wonderful ballad. But, I spoke too soon. "Gotta Get Away" returns us to the world of L.A. Southern rock. Apt title. A sensitive piano opens the closer, "Can't Take Your Memory." I know he's singing about Linda Ronstadt. Johnson misses the records she used to make before she discovered the '40s so much that he decided to fill that silent musical gap and do a Linda Ronstadt album himself. Better watch out, Johnson—Nelson Riddle just died.

The first, and title, track of Philip-Michael Thomas's debut introduces us to a voice so weak, so lifeless, I'm in awe that Thomas actually felt the need to share it with us. I can't believe how bad this is. I swear, this is "shower singing," nothing more. The title track, "Livin' the Book of My Life," is New Age reggae. I feel it's irrelevant to discuss what these lyrics mean to me. I have no doubts about Thomas's sincerity and his need to communicate a message. "Just the Way I Planned It" resembles the Last Poets, circa "Beyond," but without that great forceful edge and the talent that allowed you to ignore their awful prejudices. Thomas gives us an L.A. feel instead of that New York grit. "You Might Be the Lucky One" again drips L.A. This wouldn't be out of place on one of Boz Scaggs's later releases, both in the structure of the song and in Thomas's phrasing. But let me add that Scaggs would shoot himself in the mouth if he ever sounded or chose a song so weak. We return to the islands with "Fish and Chips." Still weak. "Everything Happens in Its Own Time" refers, I think, to the chance you have of sounding like Johnny Mathis at some point in your life. It happens to Thomas here.

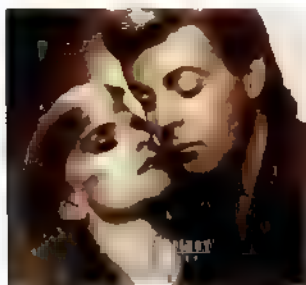
As far as side two goes, believe me, I would be wasting your time taking you by the hand song by song. I know—I just wasted mine listening to the remainder of this terribly misguided debut. Once again, the packaging is beautiful, with lovely pictures of Thomas (no guests or visiting friends on this one) and the lyrics written out for further enlightenment.

In conclusion, let's just say that it is my humble opinion that Don Johnson, having a voice, should maybe rethink his fascination with Southern boogie and L.A. AOR and maybe follow Willie around a bit more and go cowboy. Philip-Michael Thomas might want to investigate the restaurant business. Ashford and Simpson just opened up 20/20 and are doing nicely.

—Anita Sarko



Ebel Roberts



**Paul McCartney**  
Press to Play  
Capitol

Even if Paul McCartney plays wimp rock, so what? Is wimp rock a suspect classification? There are a lot of great wimp rockers, and their musical contribution is as valid as anybody else's on the charts. But McCartney's not a wimp rocker, he's a soft rocker who strays occasionally. When he strays, the smile strains, the harmonies push too hard, and the arrangement turns to quicksand. Paul took a trip there with Michael Jackson recently and probably will return in the future.

But he doesn't go there much on *Press to Play*. Instead, this album finds our hero joining the House of Neo-British Rock Lords—Collins, Winwood, Townshend, Gabriel, the Moody Blues—the revived Brit rockers who merged pre-Fairlight songstyling with digital technique to create a royal production quality that is popular on American radio. Previously, McCartney has

done a good job of producing himself (check out *McCartney II*), but in order to sit around the Roundtable of Over-30 UK Radio Rockers, he needed the hands-on contribution of Hugh (Police, Genesis, Phil Collins) Padgham.

In addition, Paul is cowriting with Eric (10cc) Stewart. It's healthy to work with other writers, but in reality, there's not much difference between the McCartney/Stewart material and solo McCartney stuff. Only "Pretty Little Head" goes somewhere different—a bit more searching and not quite as predictable as the patented PMc style. In fact, Paul seems a little concerned with his own predictability and occasionally tries to kick himself in the pants. For example, a theatrical reading of Tom Waits's comments precedes "Talk More Talk," and a tribal chant emerges in "Pretty Little Head."

But such touches are really unnecessary. As the great songwriters have known, there's nothing wrong with saying the same thing over. It's all in the styling and mood. Redefining that style can get tough as you get older, particularly when you've written the world's most revered ballad before you're 30 years old.

Fortunately, McCartney also writes great mid-tempo, light pop tunes. Remember his golden moments on Columbia, "Coming Up" and "Goodnight, Tonight"? He takes a good stab in that direction with the LP's catchiest tune, "Talk More Talk."

"Press," the first single and video, isn't very appealing and illustrates the two minor disappointments with the

album—a seeping lyrical mildew and the absence of McCartney's great bass riff writing. The words aren't awful—Paul's too experienced for that—but there's a bit of an odor to phrases like:

*Darling, I love you very, very, very much  
And I really am relying on your touch.*

I ain't no grammar expert, but do we need four adverbs before we get to the third line?

But even with his lyrical impairment, there's good music on *Press to Play*. "Angry" features Pete Townshend's tight-ass guitar and McCartney's busy bass. "Move Over Busker" is also fun—the bass line takes off, the piano rings true, and McCartney sings well. The LP ends with "However Absurd," which is in the "Maybe I'm Amazed" mold. Things build appropriately in a late-Beatles swirl of instrument, voice, and sound, and then it's all over.

Considering the tragedy of the Beatles publishing legacy, it would be nice to see PMc logging in some monster compositions. "Stranglehold" and "Talk More Talk" rightfully deserve radio attention, but the whole album, as well crafted as it is, offers too much conventional McCartney and not enough exceptional. It's his best album in six years, but we want better.

—Rich Stim



**Frank Sinatra**  
Frank Sinatra—The Voice  
The Columbia Years  
1943–1952  
Columbia

March 27, 1951: Frank Sinatra enters a New York recording studio for a session with longtime arranger-conductor Alex Stordahl. Though the 36-year-old entertainer has spent the past decade establishing himself as THE first pop star—and a top box office draw, to boot—his popularity has begun to wane. Losing fans and, temporarily, his voice, not to mention a stormy romance with actress Ava Gardner, the man's life has been turned upside down.

But love and dedication to singing have drawn him to the microphone once again. After tracking the tune "Love Me," Sinatra prepares to air his vocals on "I'm a Fool to Want You." Those present in the studio have little difficulty in recognizing that he is pent up with emotion as he launches into the opening bars of the song.

One take and it's all over. Without pausing to hear a playback, Sinatra heads for the door and makes a dramatic exit from the studio. The session is over....

Thirty-five years later, that haunting rendition of "I'm a Fool to Want You" has lost none of its emotion-charged delivery. The song, cowritten by the singer, is just one of 72 numbers featured on Columbia Records' new Sinatra six-pack.

Writing on what have often been cited as the Chairman of the Board's most significant recordings is by no means an easy task. Sure, it would be easy to rely on the tedious "What Becomes a Legend Most?" theories, rambling on about Sinatra's importance in the entertainment world, throwing in a few Mafia-link cheap shots, and generally bluffing it. But you don't fuck with Frank.

What we have on our hands is a collection of material recorded during Sinatra's eight-year tenure with Columbia—his later work emerged on the Capitol and Reprise labels. From his first Columbia recording in June 1943, "Close to You," to his last, 1952's "Why Try to Change Me Now," this package presents a well-rounded selection of material—some brilliant, some good, and some just plain Frank.

Fact is, Sinatra at his worst still sounds great. Even on a version of "There's No Business Like Show Business," which critics could so easily slam, the man ultimately wins the listener over. Ethel Merman, eat your heart out!

Well, Sinatra's work from his Columbia years has been divided here into six categories: Sinatra Standards, Sinatra Swings, Sinatra Screen, Sinatra Love Songs, Sinatra Stage, and Sinatra Saloon Songs. Far better for the avid Sinatra collector, casual listener, or first-time buyer would have been to avoid pigeonholing the songs; just present them in straight chronological order.

In 1943, a year before he began recording for Columbia, the young man from Hoboken, New Jersey, had started to take the entertainment world by storm with his radio work and concert performances.

An interesting newspaper quote from the summer of '43 stated: "Women have gone mad about the man when he sings in a curious, soft, effortless—almost girlish—voice. Something happens to feminine listeners. They shriek: 'Here I Am Frankie, Come And Get Me!' or 'Frankie You're Killing Me!' Others swoon, and some have stormed the stage to kiss the little crooner. In fact, things have become so delirious that psychiatrists have been called in to study the problem...."

In less than a decade, times had most certainly changed for "The Little Crooner"—a fact made quite apparent by his recorded work, particularly on "I'm a Fool to Want You," where emotion takes over The Voice.

—John Waite

Linda and Paul flaunt their mistakes.





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Luano Levine



**B-52's**  
Bouncing Off the Satellites  
Warner Bros.

The B-52's started out as a musical surf 'n' turf platter, everyone's favorite novelty act, a garage band that recycled riffs from spy and beach party movies, moved to edgy dance rhythms, and camped it up shamelessly, delightedly. They sang out-of-tune so nonchalantly that their status as gifted amateurs became a banner, a flag they could wave.

Eight years and five records down the road, the joke's worn awfully thin. With successful records and tours and film and TV appearances under their belts, they can no longer pose as amateurs, and the wink behind the songs, behind the pose, has hardened into a leer. Their solution this time out has been to smooth out their edges and go for a frothy, poppier sound. With producer Tony Mansfield at the controls and helping with synths and drum machines, *Bouncing Off the Satellites* is clean, well-manicured, and dull, as if halfway through the joke they'd forgotten the punch line or couldn't quite remember why they'd ever thought it funny in the

first place. It's like a beach party where there's no beer, and where Mike Love shows up and tries to sell you insurance.

Aside from "Wig," a fun dance song about the joys of hairpieces, and "Housework" ("Don't need a man to treat me mean, I need a man to help me clean"), most of the songs are half-hearted and unconvincing, as if all the energy and imagination had gone into the titles ("Girl From Ipanema Goes to Greenland," "Theme for a Nude Beach") with not much left over for the songs themselves. The exceptions, the songs that work best, are the ones that are the straightest, the most delicate, and the ones sung with the least artifice. "Ain't It a Shame" is a lovely, countryish ballad about the last stages of a love affair:

*Flying saucers could land  
And it wouldn't make much  
difference to my man  
I could walk aboard and thank the  
Lord  
And leave this damn town in seconds  
flat  
Check my bags and never come back  
And "She Brakes for Rainbows," despite its somewhat hippie title and image ("She knows where the rain goes, She brakes for rainbows"), is a surprisingly convincing evocation of late '60s wonder and dreaminess that wouldn't have been out of place on a Carpenters record.*

Both are sung with genuine charm and affection by Cindy Wilson, and they suggest that if the band relaxed its pose a bit, they could go from being jaded amateurs to wide-eyed professionals.

—Brian Cullman



**Georgia Satellites**  
Georgia Satellites  
Elektra

The Georgia Satellites may be the unhappiest thing on vinyl this season—a southern bar band with Jim Dandy-styled vocals, fifth generation Stones licks, and a shameless interest in rock 'n' roll clichés.

But rock 'n' roll clichés, like Tinker Bell, can come to life if you believe hard enough; and the Satellites are the newest believers, radiating a kickass positivism that is so vivid you can imagine the guys doing a brotherhood handshake in their van. If the diehards of AOR radio feel abandoned by record biz demographics, now's the time to phone in the add-ons.<sup>2</sup>

On their debut LP, the Satellites travel down the well-worn road of 12-bar blues-rock with a dual-guitar, bass, and drums setup. By keeping it to basics and bypassing "sweetening" and synths, ex-Sabbath producer Jeff Glixman has created a modern six-pack boogie-rock record that comes out rolling with the relaxed, even-tempoed confidence of Bachman Turner Overdrive. It's not only a traditional sound, it's a traditional rock album format with radio singles ("Battleship Chains"), jukebox rockers ("Myth of Love"), party poppers ("Keep Your Hands to Yourself"), and can't-drive-55 traffic stoppers ("Railroad Steel" and "Red Light").

With the exception of the pub-rock flavored "Can't Stand the Pain," side two is straight-up "last call for alcohol" with "Golden Light," "Over and Over," and the acoustic-electric "Nights of Mystery" (which offers the final word in booze-hound cosmology: "All I need is one fine moment of intuition and clarity"). The LP finishes with a tribute to the fathers of AOR, a Keith Richards-styled cover of the Wood-Stewart classic, "Every Picture Tells a Story."

Guitarists Dan Baird and Rick Richards trample through a jungle of rock riffs with Baird handling the majority of the vocal leads and Richards carrying the lead guitar work. No matter who's singing, the topic is mostly love Southern-style: a love that "walks a thin, hard line" ("The Myth of Love") and is as heavy as "Battleship Chains." On the LP's opener, "Keep Your Hands to Yourself," Baird presents a morality monologue on commitment:

*She told me a story  
'Bout free milk and a cow  
And said, "No hugging, no kissing  
Until I get a wedding vow"*

The Satellites have come a long way since their six-song UK EP, and we're lucky that their regional ascendance has been so well documented. Like the crazed female stunt driver in "Red Light" ("She's got Van Halen wailing on a stereo eight-track"), they are careening along rock's slippery road with assurance and style.

—Rich Stum

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Album-oriented radio (hereafter referred to as "AOR") is an FM radio format that features album cuts from rock artists. During its heyday in the '70s, it catered primarily to young white males obsessed with women, cars, and a working man's code. The music featured electric guitars, 214 drum beats, and a singer who waxed with conviction and sincerity on any of the previously noted topics. Although the format has been diluted in recent years due to marketing factors, a fair approximation of the true AOR concept can still be heard on WXRK (New York), WLLZ (Detroit), KLOS (Los Angeles), and KISS (San Antonio).

<sup>2</sup>An add-on occurs when a programmer "adds on" a new song to the station's weekly rotation. The decision to "add-on" new music is one of monumental importance to record companies (who depend on add-ons to chart an artist's success), to promo men (whose job it is to convince the programmer to make the add-on), and to the radio station (who wields the divine power to make or break an artist's success). Outside of the music business, the "add on" is inconsequential and only comes to the public's attention in congressional hearings or celebrity biographies.

The B-52's froth it up (above left, L-R): Fred Schneider, Cindy Wilson, Keith Strickland, Kate Pierson. Georgia Satellites, the unhappiest thing on vinyl (below, L-R): Dan Baird, Rick Richards, Rich Price, Mauro Magallon.



David Michael Kennedy



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# *Salem Spirit*

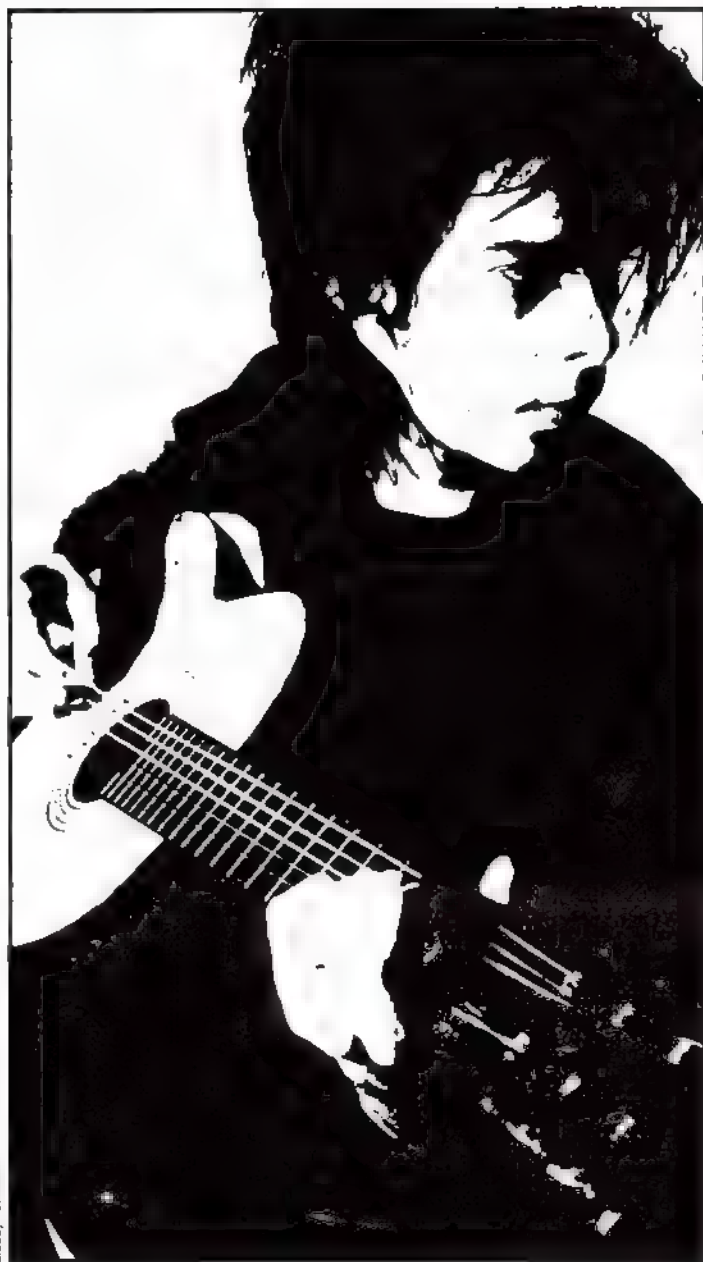
*Share the spirit.  
Share the refreshment.*



# UNDERGROUND

Column by Andrea 'Enthall

1978 was the year of the Sex Pistols. Ian Curtis's suicide in 1980 brought Joy Division to the public ear. In 1984 the Birthday Party disbanded. Thus begins our lesson in rock history.



Bladdyn Butcher

**Y**ou already know the Pistols/Public Image and Joy Division/New Order stories. Birthday Party lead

vocalist **Nick Cave**

progressed beyond the Party's scream-and-dive frenzy on his first two solo LPs. Now he's decided on a whole new direction. Wayne Newton, move over. Here comes balladeer Nick. His third solo album, *Kicking Against the Pricks*, has moments, but overall it's a dreary, self-indulgent blob. Cave and Company's grunty version of the Velvet Underground's "All Tomorrow's Parties" is one of the album's winners. Squeals of artfully laid down feedback burble with avant energy to evoke the feeling of a dirge without settling into one. Cave's version is good, but groundbreaking it's not — the Method Actors did a similarly upbeat interpretation two years earlier. "I'm Gonna Kill That Woman" bursts with the old screech-and-desist mania Nick invented. Couched in old blues/R&B traditions, with an ending of teeth chattering and icy calm, it's the story of a murder told from the murderer's perspective—the kind of crazy killer Cave does marvelously. When Cave's fascination with black blues is wedded to doo wop and gospel on "Jesus Met the Woman at the Well," the album hits another high point. Doo wop is new territory for Cave, and he shines when he's experimenting. But then, Cave plods through "By the Time I Get to Phoenix" with a deep, dull, melodramatic delivery. "Something's Gotten Hold of My Heart" is a lifeless song with nauseating strings. "Sleeping Anleah," an electric piano ballad, sways and returns like a romantic Oktoberfest drinking tune. Cave didn't write any of the songs, but he picked them, and that's part of the problem. These are his Roots and he takes them Very Seriously. Given a gutsy core, they could be literature: here they're just bombast masquerading as Art. "The Hammer Song" tries to wade past the art barrier with plinks that shift from left speaker to right and back. His voice is double-tracked to sing in round with himself, and those plinks keep teasing, increasing the tune's tension in preparation for one of Cave's explosions. But in the end there's no payoff in the song or to this album, which comes from Homestead Records, P.O. Box 570, Rockville Centre, NY 11571.

**Pulp** understands the difference between passion and bombast, at least on their 12-inch EP "Dogs Are Everywhere." They're one of those minor league British indie bands that has never produced records of consequence. Their music is every bit as arty as Cave aspires to be, and their vocals are in that deep, dark cellar obligatory for early '80s underground bands. But there's something spooky to their surreal lyrics and bagpipe-inspired keyboard: "97 Lovers" is the tale of a black-widow human who

does something dark and deathly to her used mates. The Hitchcocks could take credit as an influence, Robyn for its twistedly calm, slow delivery, and Alfred for the story line. "Aborigine" is a monotone-voiced dirge over what sounds like bamboo stick percussion. The track builds with sinister synth and chunky slathers of guitar. It too is a tale of matrimonial murder, but unlike the stories on *Pricks*, the songs on "Dogs" are so tense and involving that listening to them leaves you exhausted. Which is the point of passion, if not the point of rock. Listeners who like Bauhaus and Cave and Hitchcock's twisted tales are likely to like Pulp's sinister ballads and even more sinister breathing. You can get more information by writing Pulp at 31 Flockton Court, Sheffield, S1 UK.

In the late '70s, critics labeled Pere Ubu and Suicide "industrial" because they came from highly developed urban areas and used clanking, repetitive rhythms reminiscent of machinery. **Head of David** makes contemporary industrial music out of hard, slow, screeching chords. Their use of feedback makes the Jesus and Mary Chain look like Karen Carpenter; their use of rhythm makes a funeral cadence seem like a hot disco beat. David creates harsh sounds that are hard to listen to, with roots in Suicide's alienating pound. "Rocket USA," one of Suicide's most famous compositions, surfaces on their EP "Dogbreath." Plodding like a drill press, stamping each card and moving on, it crawls through the original Martin Rev/Alan Vega composition with deep, grunge guitar in place of the duo's unrelenting synth. A flat voice of terror replaces Vega's flamboyantly haunted whoop. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being listenable, David would score a minus 2. But then, the original would have scored a minus 20. Popular synthesizer was in its infancy in those days, and when Suicide wrote "Rocket," it was as alien to the taste of their time as "Dogbreath" is to ours. Head of David is not for everyone. If you like pop, you'll hate this. They don't re-create the sound of Suicide. They re-create the feeling that music can not get any more abrasive without descending into pure noise. Any store in your area can get "Dogbreath" from Rough Trade Distribution, 415-621-0410.

Apparently the **Trespassers'** idea of a blitzkrieg is a pillow fight, so the "Bop" in their version of "Blitzkrieg Bop" goes ballad on their 12-inch EP "Paris in Between the Wars." Imagine the guitar lines of the Ramones' original plucked on mandola (a lutelike

Left: Nick Cave, *Musicologist*. Right: *Up in arms over the Spanish Revolution*.





acoustic instrument) as a sweeping, flanged synth slowly crosses through each verse. British poet Attila the Stockbroker adds delicate vocals, pronouncing every "b" and "p" in "bop" with the enunciation of a tuxedoed butler, delivering each "hey, ho, let's go" with a clipped monotone. What was written as a fast and furious firestorm has been transposed into a shimmeringly sparse melody with the scratchy ambience of "Sister Europe" from the Psychedelic Furs' first LP. Attila is only a guest for that cut, but the band's own compositions are just as alluringly soft. The title track is a delicately recited tale of a French cancan dancer who holds her male audience under a bewitching spell: "Music gets intoxicating like a sultry hymn. Her dancing is fascination, and incantation," Cor Gout intones with a foreign-tinged accent over Bart Weber's soft and slinky snake-charm guitar, while uncredited percussion taps lightly to create the song's sparse electro tom-tom. The chorus sings a sweet "come see her dance, look

mama, no hands" in the middle and an even more majestic "come see her dance, look mama, no pants" at the end. She's not wearing any pants on the record label either, but that's all I'm going to say, except to warn you not to let your parents see how the centerpost of your turntable relates to the black and white suggestion of her form. This record was manufactured by CBS of *Haarlem*, the Netherlands, and imported into the US by an unknown distributor. If you know who imported it—help!

At about the same time as the Los Angeles band X was hiring civil liberties lawyers to keep the police from bashing in the heads of their fans, an Australian band who knew nothing of the American X's existence was laying down hard and primitive chords under the same name. The black-and-white cover of their debut album, *Aspirations*, also featured a large letter X that seemed to be burning: 1979 must've been a big year for crosses on fire. It

was a time in music when traditions were gleefully burned. (Australian) X sing about "Delinquent Cars" and how much of a waste going out at night is, in sore-throated shouts over groaning bass chords, incessant drum beats, and fuzzy drips of melodious guitar. Their lyrics are lighthearted but not light-headed, and their sound is almost minimal in its primitive, echoed drum pulse and harmony-less singing. Most Americans never got to hear the stop-and-start deep surf chords of their "Batman" or the crawlingly slow slink of their bass. But then, most Americans never got to hear any of the noncommercial music

**Nick Cave has decided on a whole new direction. Wayne Newton, move over. Here comes balladeer Nick.**

of the late '70s. You can hear this X now by asking your favorite record store to order it through Rough Trade Distribution, 415-621-0410.

Holland also produced a band in the early '80s named the Ex. A multimedia ensemble with an interest in graphics, their latest release, *CNT FAI 1936 The Spanish Revolution*, commemorates the 50th anniversary of that event with 138 black-and-white photos preserved through the Institute for Social History in Amsterdam. There's an apron-clad housewife on a rooftop who aims a long-barreled rifle at some unseen military target, and long rows of men bend over sewing machines, making clothes for soldiers at the front. Many of the pictures were taken in the romanticized '30s style that makes every undershirted baker and wrinkled peasant look like a hero of the state. There's a limited text full of words like liberation, workers, revolution, and anarchy. Instead of '30s crooners, the two 7-inch records that slip into the front and back covers of this book play pounding guitar scrapings with evenly chanted vocals. Two sides play lyrics from political folk songs of the era. The other two are Ex's tribute to that time and its ideology. Ex's compositions are dramatic, dynamic jaunts into anarchic punk, with bracing slashes of percussion and the kind of sawing, repetitive structures often used by the Fall. They contain vigorous couplings of loud and soft passages and lots of harshly fuzzed guitar. The drumming chums and marches and smashes. They don't sing, they chant. You can contact the Ex at Galgenstraat 4a, 1013 LT Amsterdam, Holland. Their record comes from an English company, Ron Johnson Records, 26 Cobden, Long Eaton, Nottingham NG10 1BP, UK.

About 2,500 records a year are auditioned for this column. If you'd like to make that 2,501, my address is P.O. Box 4904, Panorama City, CA 91412. If you send me a stamped, self-addressed envelope and a request for it, I'll send you my list of the best/worst named bands. There really is a band named Ow! My Hair's on Fire Are You Bothered, and a Velvet Underwear.





Falco: "The Sound of Musik" (Sire)

Falco is less an entity than a parameter of taste. His records tell you not who he is but what he likes. And like any yuppie projection, he's both slightly repugnant and unerringly tasteful. The two are probably interrelated, but that's another subject. Unlike yuppie-god Bowie, Falco doesn't burden you with the promise that he could make substantial stuff if he wanted to. This is what he's absorbed; this is what he makes. So pass the sushi, turn up the CD in your BMW, and enjoy the ride. "Musik" is less industrial than "Rock Me Amadeus" or "Vienna Calling" and more relaxed than either. It's a glide, with a little funk guitar, some English thrown in among the German, and an easy tempo you can move to. Hey, I wouldn't admit to liking this if I didn't get paid for it. But I'd be lying if I concentrated only on the hollowness of this hollow pleasure. Hell, even flannel-shirted scribes aren't immune to sushi and BMWs.

Royal Ron and Pimp Pretty: "P.S.K. Rocks the B Boy" (Schoolly-D)  
D.J. Code Money: "Itz Krok" (Schoolly-D)

Okay for capitalism. Schoolly-D, the only man not in Big Stick who really matters, has gotten his own West Philly label underway for real with a couple of releases as uncompromising as the raw aesthetic he pioneered on "Gucci Time." Nothing as boffo as that epochal single, but an encouraging turn after Schoolly's last "Gangster Boogie," which he disclaims as a bootleg of some old stuff. Royal Ron and Pimp Pretty espouse the masculine virtues of the Parkside Killers and tell you how they like to stand in a B-boy stance. Code Money's track is an instrumental, and whatever relationship it has to crack is a mystery to me. I miss the booming echo of "Gucci Time," but I suppose Schoolly has moved on.

John Fogerty: "Eye of the Zombie" (Warner)

The simple truths advanced by Creedence songs were self-evident; you wondered why someone didn't think of them before. And wondered again after each listening. Not so the new Fogerty. "Old Man Down the Road" sounded dead familiar, if (at least) not deadeningly contemporary, and the rest of the record was sentimentally off the mark. But "Zombie," unlike the last batch, sounds fucking modern. It sounds less like Fogerty than like 1986. From the opening hyperbolic snare volley, "Zombie" is totally predictable and already dated. Forged paintings reveal themselves as such over time because they show tropisms from an inappropriate era; "Zombie" is like a Creedence forgery, 'cept they botched it so bad the inappropriate tropisms overshadow the subject matter. And if this is Fogerty's best cut, God help us.

**Falco doesn't burden you with the promise that he could make substantial stuff if he wanted to. So pass the sushi, turn up the CD in your BMW, and enjoy the ride.**

Club Nouveau: "Jealousy" (Tammy Boy)

Jay King produced Timex Social Club's "Rumors," released it on his own Jay Records, then formed Club Nouveau and remade the song as "Jealousy." This record moves with all the unencumbered ease of the first. If anything, it's a little cleaner. But it isn't as much fun. "Rumors" was a gossipy antigossip song, a sly scheme that had its cake and ate it too. "Jealousy" is a bitter attack on, I presume, Timex. Timex kept the rumors alive under the playful guise of squelching them; Nouveau takes the rumors too seriously. Though it does cough up a neat improbability: King says Timex grabbed their laurels and then abandoned him 'cause they were jealous of him. A jealous record about jealousy? Maybe King kept "Rumors"'s contradiction alive after all.

Cameo: "Word Up" (Polygram)

Straight up funk, unenlightened and not wildly conceptual, as if Larry Blackmon doesn't know what year II is or never considered the Kool and the Gang method of getting over. Which is to say, an undiluted rocker. And if you can't find the one, your behind needs glasses. You got horns, a post-"When Doves Cry" crunch beat, and vocals compressed to the width of one nostril. "Tell your mother, your brother, and your sister too/We're about to throw down and you know just what to do." It's perhaps too late for meaningless lyrics like these to ring a bell outside of Replacements records. But if Rick James could rock like Cameo does here, you'd like him better. I play this a lot, and it never fails to get me up. And in a month from now I'll probably lay it to rest forever.

Word of Mouth (featuring DJ Cheese): "Coast to Coast" (Profile)

You can tell that producer Duke Bootee, cowriter/rapper on "The Message," belongs to the old school, cause when he turns this record over to the bass, he lifts a piece of Spoonie Gee's classic

Left: Falco displays his taste buds; Right: Arthur Russell lies down with cello.

# Singles

Tales of Passion and Other Segregationist, Sexist Folderol

Column by John Leland

**M**uch as any fan prayed for it, the success of Run-D.M.C.'s "Walk This Way" leaves a bad taste in my mouth. It's one thing to take a cynical approach to a racist problem, another to watch it succeed, thereby validating all your original cynicism. So a track that's far from the band's best suddenly warms the ears of AOR and CHR programmers who wrote off "Rock Box" and "King of

Rock" as black music and therefore not fit for their airwaves. This is a breakthrough? Run-D.M.C. deserve the success, but on their own terms. And what's up for them now? Are those new friends going to play the next single like they did "Walk This Way"? Or is the group gonna have to team up with the Allman Brothers to have another hit? This question is the measure of their success.



"The Big Beat." And you can tell he's a former schoolteacher, cause the hook here is the Marines' anthem. "Coast to Coast" is both as sloppy and abrasive as Word of Mouth's previous "King Kut" was, but it doesn't adhere to a center. "King Kut" was like a ball of flailing arms, legs, and rhymes; "Coast to Coast" is more like a drawer full of unmatched socks. As on Eric B's "Eric B Is President," half the fun is tracing the samples. Which would be okay if the other half were more rewarding. Nonetheless, in a month of lame rap records, this collection of inspired but undigested fragments is the best thing out there.

#### The Human League: "Human" (A&M)

The follies of white people, volume 37: in which Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis act as accomplices while the Human League tackle the schmaltzy pop soul ballad and emerge with no idea of how silly they look. This is pretty sappy territory to start with, and more graceful godfathers-apparent of ersatz soul have hit this trail and emerged with... well, what do you think of the Blow Monkeys and late Roxy Music? "Human," a whiny claim to sensitivity, undercuts the band's essential irony; the joke about Human League was that they weren't human, but digital chips. And besides, this embarrassing confession is an unbearably weak defense of infidelity, mitigated not a fig by the falsetto (read: achingly earnest) consolation, "No one else can take the place of you." If a woman bought a line like this in a movie, you'd walk out and ask for your money back. Wouldn't you?

#### The Housemartins: "Happy Hour" (Elektra)

Pretty fun little single from a bunch of English wankers who coulda done a lot worse. England not being the home of heavyweight rock this year, the Housemartins aren't exactly the Stooges. But at least they're happy. A reprieve from all that morose, self-indulgent whining, even if it only means contrived, self-indulgent ebullience. Whatever, this ditty moves along rill swiftly and bounces on its own merits like a deflated Katrina and the Waves. Without a kick or an edge, this is as meekly compelling as being high on life. But also as healthy. Disposable stuff, but the kind of thing you fold neatly and place in the garbage can with a clear conscience. After you've consumed its frothy juice, of course.

#### Kurtis Blow: "I'm Chillin'" (Mercury)

This collaboration with Trouble Funk somehow sounds more sanitized and ersatz than Blow's previous go-gone "If I Ruled the World." And less funky. Here's a record without bottom, case you were wondering what one sounded like. I pronounce death by production. But also commend Blow for the first



John Chan

(that I know of) antisexist rap. Not that it means anything, but he even tells radio programmers not to play songs that insult Veronica, Roxanne, and Evette. Okay for Blow. But still, if you want a go-go rap record, stick to the Real Roxanne's "Bang Zoom" or Tricky Tee's "Leave It to the Drums." And if you want real go-go, rob a liquor store and use the loot to buy the plain-brown-wrapper *Anthology of Go-Go* compilations.

#### Arthur Russell: "Let's Go Swimming" (Logarithm)

Indian Ocean featuring Arthur Russell: "School Bell/Tree House" (Sleeping Bag)

Arthur Russell made Loose Joints' "Is It All Over My Face" and Dinosaur L's "Go Bang!," two avant-disco cult jams which alone put him in a league with

Caribbean vacations and the Renaissance. His adventurous, dub-heavy dance records, mixological mazes, elude the mainstream and crack back across their own rhythmic spines.

Both of these new records are mixed "with love" by Walter Gibbons (who mixed Strafe's "Set II Off" to upper cult echelons), and both oughta confound unsuspecting buyers. More than songs (or even grooves), these are collages: rhythm and (for lack of a better word) melody tracks cut up and pasted on top of each other without regard to flow or tempo clashes. More like electric Miles than Regina, both records sustain themselves on hand-drums and hi-hat, refusing to give you that big boom. Like textural dub producer Groucho Smykles, Russell and Gibbons are more interested in the ingredients themselves than their integration. So neither record makes any goddamn sense, but they entice and invite you in.

#### Squirrel Bait: "Kid Dynamite" b/w "Slake Train Coming" (Homestead)

Screw it if you don't agree, but the two best young voices in rock belong to Paul Westerberg of the Replacements and Peter Searcy of Squirrel Bait. This seven-inch, a little denser and less overtly tuneful than their superb debut album (which means the rhythm section chops the shit out of the riffs), finds Searcy driving melodies through a pileup of guitars, bass, and drums. This time it's a battle, and Searcy is even more impressive when the instruments don't wanna make room for him. This is heavy metal in the negative: loud implusions of sound, in the center of which Searcy stands not victorious but alone and perhaps afraid or in pain. Can't sing along or make out many of the words, but I find this a very affecting single. From about the best sorta conventional rockaroll band I know of.

## Sideswipes

**Volcano Suns'** post-Burmese wail on "Sea Cruise" b/w "Greasy Spine" (Homestead) proves that Peter Prescott can write a real song, and that the band can do more than drone. Plus it asks the important philosophical question, "Why did the chicken cross the road/When there ain't no other side?" "Greasy Spine" tells you what to do with your red harpoon. . . . **Fresh Force** adds another chapter to the current hip hoppin' fear of female

sexuality on "She's a Skeezer" (Sutra), a formulaic but potent bite of Run-D.M.C.'s "My Adidas" beat. Ever since "La-Di-Da-Di," our boys haven't been safe on the street. Or so the sexists would have you believe. . . . **Miss Thang** has an answer for one of them. "Thunder and Lightning" (Tommy Boy) takes on the Rambo lover's jealousy of Juice's "The Rain," calling the man an "attitudeless Jeri-curl gigolo jerk" in a "\$37 rabbit coat" that "bit the neighbor's child." She says, "Yeah, you're just like 7-Up. Never had it, never will." Ruthless. . . . Amidst our mixed

blessing disco revival, 'bout my favorite connection is the Sunnyview Classics series. This month: **T-Connection's** overfunked "Do What You Wanna Do." And why not? . . . If they hadn't played Sun City and funded the PMRC, I might have something nice to say about the **Beach Boys'** cover of "California Dreaming" (Capitol). Or if there were anything nice to say about this rote display of nostalgia and professionalism. . . . **Billy Squier** forgets most of the lessons he should have learned from Run-D.M.C. and UTFO on the only partially funky "Love Is the Hero" (Capitol).





# HYNDE SIGHT

She's the Great Pretender. She used  
her eyes, she used her legs. She used her style,  
her fingers and her imagination  
to make you see there's nobody else like her.

The turning point in Chrissie Hynde's life came when she was 14 and she and a few girlfriends went to see Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels at the Chippewa Lake Park Appreciation Day show, to which all the greasers from Northeastern Ohio migrated. She wanted to be the guitar player. He played good and, naturally, if he played good, he looked good. He looked like he was plugged in. Chrissie saw the afternoon show, which ended with a fistfight onstage. She was so knocked out by it that she stayed for the evening show, which also ended with a fistfight onstage, and she realized she had been fooled.

Like every teenager in the 1960s, she wanted to be Brian Jones in the Rolling Stones. She was more inclined to be Brian Jones than to sleep with him. She wasn't thinking about things like that when she was 14. She didn't do anything like that until she was 19. She was thinking more about how cool it was to wear white trousers and a white shirt and play harmonica in a really rocking band and look really great and have a

rock teardrop guitar. It was real '60s.

When she was 16, Chrissie and a girlfriend met Ron Wood and Rod Stewart in a hotel room after a Jeff Beck Group concert in Cleveland, and it looked like she and Ron Wood would be spending the night together, except Chrissie, not quite understanding what was going on, insisted on leaving because she had a driver's training class in the morning.

Back then Chrissie wasn't thinking, "Gosh, I want to be Jimi Hendrix," but she related to him strongly and thought he was very, very happening. She still does, especially when she looks at who's around now.

The Beatles were her all-time favorite. The Stones were really rock 'n' roll and gutsy, but there was something about the Beatles that was out of this world. They touched her spirit. When she thinks about the Beatles and the Stones, she's reminded how so many people fail to see how much they were influenced by the Kinks. All she has to do is listen to something like "Autumn

Article by Scott Cohen

Almanac" and she hears it all in some of Dave Davies's chops, especially in the Beatles. One of Chrissie's favorite quotes is Dave Davies's: "It wasn't called heavy metal when I invented it."

Bob Dylan, of course, was real special—she tried to learn to play guitar from one of his early songbooks—and so were the Velvet Underground. There was no one in that band who she identified with; they were a kind of dark band she heard on the underground radio stations who made a noise that appealed to her. King Floyd's "Groove Me" was very, very hip and really sexy, and she was big on ? and the Mysterians, the Kingsmen, and her hero of all time, Iggy Pop, although with Iggy, she came in a little after the fact, not until *Raw Power*. Chrissie was from Akron, where her dad worked for the telephone company and her mom was a part-time secretary, and Iggy was up in Detroit, back in the early days, when he was with the Stooges.

Chrissie would have traded bodies with Jeff Beck in a second, just to get her hands on a guitar like his. She'd always been a guitar freak. She loved B.B. King when she first heard him on the radio. And, of course, she thought, and still thinks, there should be a statue of James Brown in every park in America. She thinks he had the greatest influence of anyone on contemporary music.

That was back in the days when all the people who had influenced her were happening, before people were gossiped about and put under a microscope. When you never saw the person, there wasn't very much to read about the person, there wasn't that much information available. Chrissie's imagination could run wild. Like, Chrissie is sure Brian Jones never poured his heart out to the press, and if he did, he was probably a twass anyway, trying to get laid. Now, especially with videos, you get to see people too much.

The truth is, Chrissie Hynde couldn't imagine being in the Detroit Wheels, the Rolling Stones, the Beatles, or any band, including the Pretenders. She can't imagine herself in videos, in history, or as anybody else. She doesn't even believe she's herself. When she sees herself in a video, or hears herself on a record, that's not her. When she looks in the mirror she doesn't see Chrissie Hynde, doesn't identify with that body, much less somebody else's. There isn't anybody she would want to be, not even for a moment, but there are people she wouldn't mind smelling for a moment, or being near, or touching, like Patrick Macnee, who played Steed on *The Avengers*, or Bobo Bolinski—"Believe me, folks, I'm no big deal"—in R. Crumb comic books.

**T**HE AVAILABLE INFORMATION: Chrissie Hynde got her first period when she was 13, on a day she was supposed to go horseback riding. (Before she was into rock 'n' roll, Chrissie was into horses.) Her period freaked her out. She had a vague idea what it was, but it embarrassed and pissed her off. She was absolutely sure it was never going to happen to her. In her school they made all the guys go to a study hall, and all the girls went off to watch a film about periods, and Chrissie couldn't look a guy in the eye for the rest of the day after what she had just seen.

- Chrissie's bangs were inspired by a picture of Jane Ascher she saw in *16 Magazine* when she was 14. Ascher was Paul McCartney's big flame for years, before he met Linda. She had ginger, or red, hair, which Chrissie thought was really cool. Greaser girls always dyed their hair red or black.

- Chrissie prefers stockings to panty hose because she doesn't like to wear panties. Stockings are better because she can hold them up with a garter belt and can pull off her underpants without undoing the whole thing every time she goes to the bathroom.

Panty hose may be more convenient when she's wearing her miniskirt, but if she's wearing a dress all day, stockings are better; but she rarely wears a dress all day. She's not a dressy girl.

- Before becoming a musician Chrissie was into painting, but not commercial painting. She didn't want to use any talent or skill she had for anything other than being creative. She would rather have been a waitress and paint on the weekends. But she didn't want to be a waitress, either. Then she thought she could make a go of it with music and make money at her hobby.

- Chrissie waitressed at Stouffer's and worked as a cocktail waitress for a while in Cleveland, when she was 23 or 24, after she went back there in 1975. "I was a lousy waitress because I had to serve meat to people. It really pissed me off. I could never be courteous or polite when I really wanted to take the thing out back and bury it. I never took very well to people hissing at me, either. Also, I was very flaky with bills, getting meals to people on time, and having to talk to them. My heart really wasn't in it."

turned out to be a complete outline for everything she did over the next 20 years.

When Chrissie was 21, her folks thought they'd buy her a watch for her birthday, but she really wanted a Melody Maker guitar that was advertised in the paper for \$60. So they bought it and she later traded it for a hollow-body Ovation guitar. Soon, she sold the Ovation and split for England and France. Meanwhile, her girlfriend went to the music store where Chrissie traded the Melody Maker and bought it. A few years later, when Chrissie went back to Cleveland and joined a band, she borrowed the Melody Maker from her friend.

Chrissie had a copy of *NME*, an English music paper, with a picture of Iggy Pop in it, which she framed and hung on her wall. She went to England in 1973, because she was influenced by this picture. She thought everyone there was interested in the kind of music she dug. All she took with her were three albums, *Raw Power*, *Fun House*, and *White*



Mike Owen

When she was at Kent State, the year they shot those students, she worked at this diner, and she found it humiliating when guys she fancied came in and she was in her waitress garb, with her hair in a hair net, and she had to serve them. She wouldn't have minded serving them in other capacities. "Also, I hated it when I worked in this snack shop and had to make banana splits. For some reason I found it humiliating if a guy saw me making an ice cream sundae." She got fired because this guy kept coming around on his motorcycle and revving his engine and motioning for her to come out, which she usually did.

**S**ometimes you'll lose something in one place and find it, much later, in another. These kinds of occurrences happen to Chrissie constantly. In fact, she made a career of them. Like when she was 12, Chrissie's teacher told everyone in class to write his favorite word on a piece of paper. Then she told them to write a poem about the word. Chrissie's word was England. The poem she wrote

*Light, White Heat*, and about \$500. She felt she might need the records for a fix somewhere along the line, but about three months after she got to England, she lent them to some guy and he left the country.

One night, she went to a party, and walked into a room full of strangers, really bummed out because someone had stolen her prize possessions. Some guy in the room said, "What was that?" "Somebody took my Iggy Pop album," she said. Then a voice said, "Oh, I know Iggy Pop," which floored her, because she could never find anyone in London who even knew who Iggy was. The voice belonged to the guy who had written the *NME* article about Iggy. He said he needed a place to stay, and when he came over and saw the pictures she had on her wall he said, "This is the girl for me." But she didn't think this was the guy for her. He did, however, get her a job writing at the *NME*.

Before Chrissie left Ohio, a guy named Duane, who was in a band, called her. He had



heard that she wanted to join a band and invited her to audition. But she told him she couldn't because she was moving to England. After spending a couple of years in England and Paris, where she failed to get a band together, she returned to Ohio in 1975 to rediscover her roots. After all she had gone through to get out of there, the last place she ever wanted to go back to was Ohio. While she was there, she ran into a drummer named Tony Fier, who later became Anton Fier, the drummer in the Golden Palominos. He was working in a record store and thought she was some kind of big shot because she had lived in England and wrote for the *NME*. He said he had a band and needed a singer. He took her over to another guy's house he was working with, and it turned out to be Duane.

After Jack Rabbit, the band she and Duane were in, broke up, Chrissie moved to Tucson, Arizona, with a girl named Ann, who had been her mother's hairdresser. Chrissie didn't like Tucson because it was really hot, and nobody there had ever heard of Bobby Womack. She was pretty bummed out. She was only there a week and already she was heartbroken. She missed Paris and wished she'd never left. The whole thing seemed like a big mistake, and she didn't know how she was going to get back or what the hell she was even doing in Tucson. Then, one day, out of the blue, she got a phone call from a guy she'd met in Paris who she didn't think even knew her. He was getting a band together and wanted her to sing. He sent her a plane ticket. The next day she was back in Paris, in a band called the Frenchies.

In 1976, Chrissie went back to London. She'd had this feeling about London. She knew something was going to break loose there. She tried a few different things with a few different people. She started a band with Mick Jones, a very London-type guy who was a Mott the Hoople fan. They put together a few songs, some of which appeared on the first Clash album. She also tried to do something with Malcolm McLaren. She had worked in Malcolm's clothes shop in London in 1974. Later, when she was back in Cleveland, he wrote her a letter asking her to front, as a boy, a band he was forming called the Love Boys. He even offered to pay for her plane ticket, but Chrissie declined the offer because she was still in Jack Rabbit. Now that she was back in London, Malcolm came up with another idea for a band called the Masters of the Backside, in which she was just going to play guitar. The drummer was going to be Chris Miller, who became Rat Scabies,



**Chrissie doesn't believe she's herself. When she looks in the mirror she doesn't see Chrissie Hynde, doesn't identify with that body.**



Photography by Miller Owen

**Chrissie wanted to be Brian Jones in the Rolling Stones. She was more inclined to be Brian Jones than to sleep with him.**

Mike Owen



the drummer in the Damned. They rehearsed and played a few songs, and everything was looking pretty good, but, like all Chrissie's previous bands, everyone went off to do something else and she was left behind. She didn't fit in because she was American and a couple of years older, and they were London kids who were part of the punk explosion.

Some guy Chrissie knew, who had been painting a ceiling for manager Tony Secunda, told Tony about this chick who could sing and play guitar. Tony, who had handled Steeleye Span and Marc Bolan, wanted to break into the punk thing. He'd been an innovative manager in the early '70s and was now feeling a little bit left out. He may have seen Chrissie as a potential way back in.

"So I went to his office with a guitar and an amp," says Chrissie, "and started playing the chords for the song that became 'The Phone Call.'" She just played the chords and looked at the guy and said, "That's it." And he said, "Great." And she said, "Well, that may be great for you, pal, but I've got to really get some money together, and I don't have time to hang out in your office and play for you, and stuff." She was delighted to see him write out a check for her rent, which was about five pounds, and he gave her 15 pounds a week for nothing, and he'd buy her lunch and sandwiches. She made him take down all his gold records from his previous acts, because she said they looked like bowling trophies. "I sort of punked the place up a little, but I was still unsatisfied, 'cause I still didn't have a band." Finally, he said she had to put something on tape, because he couldn't get her a record deal otherwise. So she went into the studio and made "The Phone Call." John Cale went down to a pub to call so they could get the beep from the phone. Tony took the record to some record companies and things looked really good. "Then, one day I was

talking to Tony on the phone, and he hung up on me, 'cause I said something he didn't like, and in those days if someone hung up on me I'd never talk to them again." And she never did.

What Chrissie isn't saying is the big role drugs played in this series of coincidences. There are always some drugs going around. Back when Chrissie was at Kent State, there was a guy named Randall, who used to go to England. He was the only guy she ever met who'd gone to England, and the only one she thought was really happening, because he came back with all these hip records, before he came back with a heroin habit. He wore English clothes and was a bit of an Anglophile. Chrissie really didn't know him, but she sure tried to get in on his scene. She met him again on the street in England, after the falling out with Tony Secunda. He was selling shirts in a stall in the Portobello Market. She started selling shirts for him and he was going to manage her. Then, the day before he was to introduce her to Dave Hill (a key player in the story), Randall and Chrissie had a falling out. But while looking through some notes and stuff, Chrissie came across a letter from Greg Shaw, who had this little record label, Bomp Records. Once, probably because she was so loaded, she had stayed up all night with Greg Shaw and tried to show him how to play "Louie, Louie" on guitar. (That's when Chrissie realized she wasn't such a lousy guitar player after all.) Nobody had ever spent that much time trying to help Greg Shaw do anything before, or else he probably wouldn't have sent Chrissie a letter telling her that if she ever wanted a record deal, to call him and he'd put her in touch with Dave Hill. Today Dave Hill is her manager.

Before the Pretenders, Chrissie knocked around with Lemmy from Motorhead. He told her to get in touch with a drummer named Gas, who lived in Lambert Grove. One day, Chrissie was in a flat in Lambert Grove, looking out the window, when a

guy fitting Lemmy's description of Gas suddenly walked by. Gas turned her on to a bass player from his hometown of Hereford named Pete Farndon. She liked the way Pete held a guitar and didn't play with a pick. All the other punk bands played with the guitar down toward their knees and with a pick, and Chrissie didn't think that was the way to play bass. She liked the way Pete played and looked, but Gas used to get so loaded all the time he kept falling off his stool. He also didn't take criticism very well. Chrissie fired Gas and kept Pete.

"I really wanted to get Phil Taylor from Motorhead to be my drummer," says Chrissie, "cause I thought he was great. I was really into this idea that my band was gonna be like a motorcycle club. I mean, like I was a bit of an asshole, I'm the first to admit, but that's my vision of it. But Phil was in Motorhead, and I would have never dreamed of asking him to join my band and sabotage another band. But there were rumors that Motorhead was gonna break up. The Heartbreakers were in town, and I knew they'd already asked Phil to join them, so I thought, 'Fuck that,' I've got to get in there and let him hear how cool we are. Then, at least if Motorhead does break up, maybe he'll come to me. So I had this idea, right? What we'll do is tell Phil that we're gonna audition a guitar player and we need a drummer to do that, and can he come down and just sit in with us. I thought that seemed like a pretty good scheme."

Pete knew a guitar player in Hereford named Jimmy Honeyman Scott, who was married and had a couple of kids. "We told Jimmy the scheme and had Phil audition him. Jimmy and I didn't get on so well, 'cause he was a speed freak and he thought I

*This year's model of the Pretenders: (left to right) Keyboardist Bernie Worrell, who is touring with the band; drummer Blair Cunningham; Chrissie; guitarist Robbie McIntosh; and bass player T.M. Stevens.*





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was a punk. He wasn't into punk music. But I was really taken with his guitar playing. I thought, 'We gotta get Jimmy Scott to come down and help us with the demos we were doing with Dave Hill.' But Jimmy had no interest in moving to London. He'd been working in a music store, which made him happy, and he had a girlfriend and a flat. But he said OK." They did about six or seven songs, then Jimmy went back to Hereford and Phil Taylor went back to Motorhead. "But I had to have Jimmy in the band. He was amazing. He was this huge Nick Lowe fan and, of course, I knew Nick Lowe, so me and Pete dropped the tape off with Nick. He was so impressed he said there was a song on there he wanted to get in on. Of course, I knew it was gonna be 'Stop Your Sobbing,' 'cause it was so pop-y, so I was quivering with excitement when I called Jimmy Scott, 'cause I knew all I had to say was Nick Lowe wants to produce a single with us and Jimmy would want to join the band. It was the perfect trick. So I called Jimmy and he said, 'Before you say anything, I'd really like to join the band.'"

Jimmy and Pete knew a drummer from Hereford named Martin Chambers, but they didn't know where he was. The previous drummer, Jerry, was good, but he was divorced and had three kids in Ireland he had to keep sending money to, so he had to keep doing gigs on the weekend. But Chrissie needed complete commitment. She didn't want people to even have a girlfriend, let alone alimony. It wasn't Jerry's fault, but he just didn't fit into Chrissie's plans. One day they bumped into Martin. It turned out that he lived two blocks up the road from the rest of them. They asked him to rehearse with them, and by the time they started playing the first song, "Precious," they all knew they finally had the band. All they needed was a name.

Chrissie had been talking to a greaser girl the night before. "We were talking about this London Hell's Angel we knew, and I was saying how he would shut his door and put on this Sam Cooke song, 'The Great Pretender,' so the other Hell's Angels couldn't hear him, and we were laughing about it. It just happened to be on my mind when Dave Hill called and said, 'Look, they're pressing this record now. What about a name?' And I said, 'Well, call it the Pretenders.'"

Chrissie and Pete had a romantic affair during the first two years of the band and after that things were never right between them. They still worked together, but they really didn't even want to see each other. Chrissie didn't want to hurt him, but she couldn't help it. He would play too loud and do things to wind her up, and she'd always take the bait. He was also very insecure about his playing. Actually, she didn't think he was that good a bass player, but he had all the enthusiasm she wanted and he had the attitude.

After the band finished their first world tour, everyone started to crack up. Chrissie was drinking like mad, getting arrested and everything. Pete was shooting smack. It was really tacky. No one even realized he was doing it. No one could believe it. No one could accept it. It couldn't be really happening. And he denied it. Toward the end of the tour, while they were in Australia, Jimmy took Chrissie aside and said they should start looking for another bass player when they got back. Musically, the band was plummeting. They took three months off, and when they got back together, Chrissie, Martin, and Jimmy decided to let Pete go. Two days later, Chrissie got a phone call from Dave Hill. He said something really strange had just happened. He thought Jimmy was dead.

"I don't know how Jimmy died. He took something, but I don't think they ever knew exactly what. I



Mika Owen

**Chrissie was sitting with her baby. There was nothing rock 'n' roll about her at all. She had almost forgotten that she'd ever been in a band.**

think it was some kind of cocaine cocktail." He was in very poor health when Chrissie met him, even though he was very young. He was kind of a burned-out speed freak and he never looked very healthy. He was also the funniest man she'd ever met. She was really close to him. But anyone who knew Jimmy at all felt he was their little brother. He called Chrissie mother. "He would breathe life into my songs. I'd have a basic song that wouldn't turn anybody's head, and Jimmy would start playing to it, and that's when it became a Pretenders song." He told Chrissie not to give her songs away, and he didn't want credit for writing them. He wasn't interested in anything to do with punk. He liked the Beach Boys. Yeah, that was his favorite. In fact, that's what they played at his funeral.

The next and last time Chrissie saw Pete was at Jimmy's funeral. She knew exactly how Pete felt. He'd been fired because he was taking drugs and then Jimmy goes and tops himself. Pete just thought it was horribly unfair and was really bitter. Chrissie didn't feel much better. Nonetheless, she and Martin had to carry on. Jimmy was replaced by Robbie McIntosh, who Jimmy, coincidentally, had asked to join the band the night before he died. Robbie is what Chrissie calls a guitar bore. "All he could do was play guitar and listen to old records. He was just like Jimmy Scott in that way." Chrissie will always have a guitar bore in the band because guitar is the staple of the Pretenders sound. Robbie's buddy, Malcolm Foster, replaced Pete Farndon on bass. Less than a year after Jimmy's funeral, Pete was found dead in his bathtub from a drug overdose.

*After Jimmy Scott died of an overdose, guitarist Robbie McIntosh replaced him in the band. Chrissie calls McIntosh a "guitar bore" because all he can do is play guitar and listen to old records.*

Chrissie was three months pregnant with her first daughter when Jimmy Scott died. Ray Davies of the Kinks was the father. They had been introduced in America by a mutual friend during the Pretenders' first world tour and lived together for four years. Chrissie had read that she had tracked Ray Davies down, pursued him and hounded him, and ruined his marriage, but it isn't true. "Sure, I wanted to meet him, but just like anyone who likes his music would want to meet him." She also met Iggy Pop, David Bowie, Paul McCartney, and Keith Richards. One rumor was that Chrissie and Ray had planned to marry and have a child nine months from the wedding night, but they had a fight on the way to the ceremony and the magistrate refused to marry them. The fact is, Chrissie never believed in marriage. Their child was born nine months later. In any event, Chrissie was never the type to pour out her heart to the press, where she could be put under a microscope. But somewhere along the way, when she met Simple Minds' Jim Kerr in Australia on her last world tour, she got hip and suddenly marriage did mean something. They got married in May 1984; 10 months later Chrissie had a second daughter.

Chrissie thinks if you're a woman and 35 years old and you don't have kids, that's unnatural. "Maybe it's not unusual, but it's unnatural, on a purely humanistic level. That would feel more odd than me having kids. People get carried away with their own self-indulgence if they're having sex and they're not having children; it can only make you go slightly off the rails mentally because it's just unnatural. You shouldn't be fucking all the time and not getting pregnant, because that's not natural, so emotionally everything else is going to get out of balance. But if you have children, that keeps things in perspective and everything's answered for. In the world we're living in people fuck for ten years and don't get pregnant because they're taking drugs."

Jim Kerr had been working with producer Jimmy Iovine and told him that Chrissie was going to try a different producer because she felt it was time for a change. Everything else had changed. The minute Jim told him Chrissie was without a producer, Iovine was ringing Chrissie's doorbell. Chrissie was sitting with her baby. There was nothing rock 'n' roll about her at all. She had almost forgotten that she'd ever been in a rock 'n' roll band. But Jimmy made her remember. She couldn't imagine what he saw in her at all. Chrissie can be really humble and pretty crazy on the side. Jim called her every day and said, "I've just gotten off the plane, have you written anything?" Chrissie said, "Why should I write anything?" "Because that's what you do!" he said. "When you're filling in your passport and it says occupation, you put songwriter." He called every day and reminded her of what she did and who she was.

So Chrissie wrote the songs on her new *Get Close* album, and Martin, Robbie, Malcolm, and she recorded it. It was a good album, but not great. The day after they thought they had finished the album, she brought in some new musicians and walked out with Robbie, bassist T.M. Stevens, and Blair Cunningham, this year's Pretenders.

**S**ometimes what you find you never lost at all. Chrissie is full of contradictions. The closer you get, the further away she seems. Don't get her wrong. Beneath that tough black leather jacket is a born-again hippie at heart. Her music sounds carnivorous, but she's strictly vegetarian. For all her cockiness, she is a simple human female, from humble beginnings, trying by hook or by crook to somehow keep the world from toppling. She comes on like gangbusters, but believe her folks, she's no big deal.



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### Chapter One: "The Love You Save May Be Your Own"

Joe Tex (he was born Joseph Arrington, Jr., on August 8, 1933, in Rogers, Texas) had been misled, and he'd been afraid. He'd been hit in the head and left for dead. He'd been abused and he'd been accused. He's been refused a piece of bread. Joe had been pushed around, lost and found, given 'til sundown to get out of town, taken outside and brutalized. He was the one who had to smile and apologize, but he never in his life (he died of a heart attack in Vavasota, Texas, in 1982) seen so many love affairs go wrong as he did on June 19, 1966. All Joe wanted was for you to stop, find out what's wrong, get it right, or just leave love alone, because the love you save may be your own. (I quit smoking February 23, 1986.)

### Chapter Two: "One Monkey Don't Stop No Show"

Joe got a letter from a friend in New York City. The friend heard Joe had some trouble with the girls down home. (Joe grew up in Baytown, Texas, where he got his start in show biz, shining shoes and singing and dancing for tips. He'll be best remembered for the sermonlike

style of rap that he developed in a club in Baton Rouge in 1960, the same year his childhood sweetheart married another man; in the middle of performing "All I Could Do Was Cry," he stopped singing and started talking.) Joe's friend advised him to catch a bus to New York. He said they had enough women up in New York to go around. He thought Joe might find himself something.

Joe had been to New York before, during his junior year in high school, after he won first prize at an amateur show in Houston, beating out Johnny Nash and Hubert Laws (first prize was \$300 and a trip to New York). In New York, Joe went to Harlem and entered the amateur show at the Apollo, where he first met Solomon Burke and won first prize: a four-week engagement.

In the letter, Joe's friend said people don't go around stealing each other's loved ones in New York. He said things don't happen like that up in New York (I beg to differ). Joe's reply was, "if you've been unlucky in love and lost somebody, and a voice comes to you in the middle of the night and tells you to get up, you better get on up. If you're having breakfast one morning and a voice at the table says, 'get up,' get on up. You better get yourself up and walk like men and women and go somewhere and find somebody." Joe says you better. It's

He was the proto-rapper. He wore shiny suits and provided homey advice on romance.

# JOE TEX BOOK OF LOVE

Article by Scott Cohen

something it took Joe a long time to find out, but he got it now. Joe found out a long time ago that one monkey don't stop no show. If you believe that, sing it one time for Joe tonight.

### Chapter Three: "Be A Lover Too"

You can call Joe a tramp. His papa was. He worked from morning 'til night, but the money never seemed to come out right. His papa was a tramp, but he was a lover, too. So why can't Joe do like Papa do? Call Joe low-down and nasty if you want to. His papa was. Papa was poor. Joe was poor, too. Just 'cause he had holes in both shoes, which he'd cover with the *Daily News*, it don't mean Joe couldn't be a lover, too.

### Chapter Four: "Everybody's Got Somebody And Their Own Way Of Saying 'I Love You.' Just Make Sure When You Say It, Be For Real"

Joe's way was to say, "I dig you, baby." Joe thought the sooner he said it, the better. The softer he whispered it, the better it felt. I agree with Joe, except with the first part. Not everybody got somebody. Joe had his own way of saying it: "Y.C.C.M.A.O.T." ("You can call me any old time"), "T.C.A.H.Y.T.U." ("To come and help you to unwind"). Joe's phone number was IGO-TCHA (Mine's 496-6100).

### Chapter Five: "You Better Hold On To What You Got"

It's not all the time Joe had a good woman, one he could hold onto and call his very own, a woman who'd mind his children while he went to work, and have his dinner cooked when he came home. Some men (not Joe) make mistakes when they stay out and play because they feel no other man wants

their woman but them. Well, take it from Joe. If you think no other man wants her, just throw her away and you'll see some man will have her before you can count 1-2-3. Even if she got skinny legs and all. For some reason, Joe had something against skinny legs, although I don't know why. If Joe didn't want them, he should have given them to me.

### Chapter Six: "A Woman Can Change A Man, Make Him Weak Or Strong, Make Him Do Right Or Do Wrong"

Show Joe a man who's got a good woman, Joe'll show you a man going to work hummin'.

### Chapter Seven: "If You See Something And You Want It, You Better Get It"

Girls, do you ever see a man you'd love to call your own, but your best girlfriend has her heart set on him too, so you stand aside because you don't want to hurt her? Joe says you do. He says "all is fair in love and war." If you see a man you want, go get that man. If you don't, another woman will beat you to it. And men, if you see a woman and you want her, you had better get her.

Joe met a woman who had what it takes to take what Joe had. What did Joe have? A letter, this one from his baby. When he got her letter, he was in a foxhole, on his knees, in Vietnam. He was so moved by the letter that he (you won't believe it) raised up and got himself two enemies. He'd think of something sweet she wrote and he'd feel so good inside, he'd rise up and get himself two more. He wished he got married before he left home for Vietnam, but after seeing so many of his buddies shot down, he's glad he waited. They promised Joe a furlough on the 15th of next month. Everybody pray tonight that Joe's furlough comes through. ☺



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# O, BROTHER

Jimmy Lee Swaggart, possessed and mesmerizing prophet of the airwaves, attacks sin everywhere but at home. Our exposé shows why people in glass churches shouldn't throw stones.

*I have had reporter unto reporter ask me, "What are you Christians trying to do? Are you trying to take over the government and make this a Christian nation?" Well, yes, I've been trying to make this a Christian nation ever since I was nine years old. I'm trying to make it a Christian world. I'm trying to convert everybody to the Lord Jesus Christ.*

—Jimmy Swaggart

He was born in Louisiana in 1935. Seventeen years later his mother dreamed that he died. "What a dream I had," said happy Minnie Bell Swaggart to her one and only son Jimmy Lee. "I had a dream you died, and now I know: you did die—to the things of this world."

Minnie Bell obviously didn't include money in the things of this world, because when you watch Jimmy Swaggart in action, on his crusades, or in daily life, the first thing you realize is that there is a lot of money in Jesus.

You also realize that there is room for no other religion next to Jimmy's; there is no place for beliefs other than Jimmy's; and there is no mercy for you if you don't surrender and give your heart and soul to your savior, Lord Jesus Christ. Or at least surrender some money to his evangelist prophet.

He is a preacher and a performer.

He hasn't gone completely Hollywood, but he does give autographs on Bibles. He can say "E-L-L-I-P-S-O-I-D" and move you to tears. He is a very convincing actor who onstage is the ringmaster of hellfire preaching, gospel music, and saving your soul.

Swaggart is living proof that there are profits to be reaped from doing the Lord's work. His diligence has made him big.

As the leading evangelist in the world, and the most watched in the U.S., he has millions of followers who respond to him emotionally and financially. According to Arbitron, he has a nationwide TV audience of 8 million—500 million people worldwide, according to Swaggart's publicity. He is on television in 145 countries. He has 564 missionaries, 1400 employees, 2000 stations, 2000 cable outlets, and a Bible college with 500 students. Every crusade costs him \$200,000, and he gets 50,000 letters a week from people who found Jesus through his preachings. He is being published not only in his monumental magazine *The Evangelist*, but he has a new syndicated newspaper column. His ministry includes 11 buildings and takes in over \$12 million a month. According to his son Donnie, vice-president of the Ministries, last year's earnings were \$140 million, although Jimmy says \$150 million.

Swaggart's offices in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, are not the Spartan surroundings one might expect. They are luxuriously modern, and on entering, one is struck by the high security.

Swaggart doesn't drink, doesn't party, doesn't appreciate fancy restaurants and good food.

I asked him, then, how does he spend his time and money?

The man with the red leather boots (given to him by one of his followers) and the \$5000 Rolex (given

to him by a California jeweler) gave me one of his best-loving smiles and said, "Well, I spend the time in working for God, and I spend the money, what little I have, in giving it back to God."

Swaggart is a big man, about six foot two. His smile has a hypnotic effect; you long for him to hug you, to take you under his wing, to forgive and protect you.

I'm getting closer to him. He smells of soft tempting cologne, and for a minute I want to dive into the big blue eyes of the man who was eight years old when God called him to preach the gospel.

"Did you really want to become a boxer?" I ask.

"Oh," he laughs, "that was a long time ago."

"You don't want to do that anymore?"

"No, no. When I was a kid my father would put on gloves, but he had mercy on me. Sometimes he'd take off his belt and whip me, and I needed it. I was kind of mean. . . ."

He tends to laugh a lot, even when nothing is really that funny. On the other hand, he doesn't smile when he starts talking Jesus. Salvation. Donations.

He wants to save you, in the literal sense of the word, and his blue eyes darken when he gets into his hard-core preaching. We are sort of conversing. I ask questions and he lectures his answers. He looks good on his leather sofa. Relaxed and mellow, he will talk about everything—from Andy Warhol to birth control to oral sex.

*God called my husband to be an evangelist when he was eight years old, that's truth. And he totally dedicated his life to that, and he's tried in every way*

Article by Michelle Mayron

## When Swaggart suspected employees of revealing inside information, dozens of them were interrogated.

"We were collecting the majority of the funds for the children's fund, and eventually the majority of the funds were not going to the children's fund. We were collecting the money to feed hungry kids, but we were building buildings and furnishing them."

One former employee has claimed that Frances Swaggart bought an \$11,000 desk under another name so that the extravagance couldn't be traced back to the Ministries. Journigan couldn't assure me that the desk cost that much but said: "It might only have been \$9,000, but anyway, her desk was not the most expensive, as I remember. Probably Donnie's was. All three, including Jimmy's, were quite expensive. It really wouldn't have made any difference if it was expensive furniture or cheap furniture. If you collect money for a children's fund, it ought to go to the children's fund."

Another former Swaggart employee points out, "They live very extravagantly. They have two mansions and they got the third one, for Frances's brother, almost ready. They have spent millions over there, and yet they claim their income is as low as \$50,000 to \$60,000 a year. Can you build a multimillion dollar mansion with several swimming pools for only \$60,000 a year? Can you drive three Lincoln Continentals or Lincoln Town Cars and one Mercedes? And of course the real story is that the contributors don't know that their money is being spent in such a lavish mode."

Brother Swaggart, you must be aware of the criticism concerning your extravagant lifestyle, the enormously expensive furnishing of the Swaggart suite, and the idea that only the Swaggarts are allowed to deal with the millions of dollars the Ministries receives.

Oh, yes, of course he is aware of it, he says. "Well, you see," he told me kindly, "most of the criticism is dying because all we do all around the world is very obvious and undeniable." Continues brother Jimmy, very relaxed: "I only have the house I built. That's it. I have no stocks, no bonds, no investments. And the donation money—to be frank with you, I never see the donations. They're in another building and we never see it."

Simple as that?  
"Oh, yes, simple as that. Frances's office is right there, on this floor, and Donnie's is right here too, and the money is in another building, and there are probably 50 to 70 people that handle it, and we never see it, never have seen it. Sometime I'll walk there, taking a visitor on a tour, but I never touch it or see it or anything like it. And of course we have to account for everything."

"I couldn't get money over there any more than you can. I can't do it. Because it's governed strictly by federal rules and guidelines. The money that's taken on the crusades? I never see that money. Here's what happens to it. They take it back in a room where about 50 people, not our people but from the local churches, count it. Then it's put in bags and supervised by a CPA and others. Then those bags are locked and there's no one there who's got a key, and I never see them. The bags are sent back here and they're picked up by guards, and the guards don't have the keys. And they're picked up by accounting and in front of a whole lot of people it's counted, and it's supposed to tabulate with what they counted in Washington and every place."

"Let's say I took you out to McDonald's—I really love McDonald's—and got some hamburgers. If the



Anchey Framberg

to be what God would have him be. But without people like you, the calling that God placed on his heart wouldn't be possible. I thank you for your prayers because many many times God has told you to pray for the Ministries and to pray for my husband and you wouldn't know it, you wouldn't know the spiritual battle that is going on, and you wouldn't know the need that we're facing at the time. But God would touch you and you would go to pray. Hallelujah. It's so sweet and it's so beautiful that Christians are the same all over the world and Jesus is the same and that's what makes us one great big family.

—Frances Swaggart, Washington, D.C., crusade, September 1986

That big happy family includes Jimmy and Frances Swaggart and Donnie and Debbie Swaggart with their three children. Frances's mother and brother joined the extended family, and they all live and work in Jimmy Swaggart Ministries in Baton Rouge.

You don't know much about the Swaggarts.

You know, of course, they know the Lord.

You know they go on crusades, trying to convert America and save its soul.

You know they live pretty well, it was in the papers.

You might not know Swaggart was the largest local employer of unionized construction workers and that Swaggart Ministries created 1,502 new jobs in Baton Rouge. In a city where the unemployment rate is one of the highest in America, employment is power. In order to cope with Jimmy and Frances Swaggart, employees put up with some highly unusual practices or else become part of the unemployment statistics.

Jimmy and Frances Swaggart like their employees to be loyal, obedient, and slim. To ascertain their loyalty, they make them take lie detector tests. To slim them they make them take the "weight test." And obviously, if they go through all this, they must be quite submissive.

Three years ago John Camp from Channel 2, Baton Rouge, was working on a documentary titled *Give Me That Big Time Religion*. The Swaggarts suspected some of their employees of revealing inside information. Dozens of people were interrogated, among them Dr. Marvin Suln, who worked with Swaggart for more than six years.

Dr. Suln was fired on the spot.

Dr. Suln didn't think the lie detector and other ideas were Jimmy Swaggart's. "I think it's mostly his wife that has had influence on him," he said sadly.

Most people who used to work for the Swaggarts don't stay in Baton Rouge. But Dr. Suln stayed. "Getting reestablished in Baton Rouge has been almost impossible. I've gone through a severe and difficult time. It was tragic, but I have survived. Or sort of."

Another executive, who later resigned from the Ministries, took the lie detector test and says: "Jimmy and Frances made every [executive] staff member take that test, as well as some of the lower management. Scores of people took it. I had nothing to hide, so of course I passed it."

Luckily, he passed another test too: the weight test.

"Frances got on this kick," he said, "that everybody was too fat, so she made everybody go on this mandatory weight-loss program. The incentive was, you got to keep your job—so many people took it very seriously and got very upset."

He got the message that Frances Swaggart thought it was un-Christian to look fat. He adds, "Frances had been rubbing elbows with the jet set for such a long time that she felt that everybody needed to shape up."

So the Ministries employees had to go down to the Ministries lobby and get weighed. "We had to try to meet the ideal weight standard on the chart," this former employee told me, "and they also built a jogging track to lose weight. Jimmy didn't participate in all this because he was already exercising a lot and because he didn't have to be in to work at eight o'clock."

One day we are going to stand before God, we are going to answer for the lifestyle we've lived, we're going to answer for the money, every dollar that's coming to this Ministry. My husband and I have to stand before God and answer for it. And what I can tell you right now, and I feel it with all of my heart, that if that were to take place today, I believe the Lord Jesus Christ would look at us and say, "Well done."

—Frances Swaggart

George Journigan, former director of finance for the Swaggart Ministries, was asked to resign after arguing with Swaggart over the issue of the children's fund.



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Ministries pays for it, I have to write down your name and how much money was spent and what we discussed while we were there."

Obviously, one needn't worry about financial subversion in the Swaggart organization. Not only is the money kept in a separate building where Jimmy Swaggart can't see it much less touch it, but the Reverend accounts for even the 99-cent burgers he so humbly lunches on.

To hear him tell it, somehow it all seems to make sense. What doesn't make sense is how this simple, humble man of God can live like a jet-set millionaire. It would be interesting to see records of how and where the money is spent. Even in the faith business, seeing is believing.

The Ministries' fund-raising letters and television pitches are filled with references to its commitment to feed the hungry children and build Bible schools.

In every crusade, Jimmy Swaggart's counselors pass big, white buckets to collect donations.

Swaggart claims they are very efficient in their dealings with the funds: "Oh," he said, using a host of superlatives, "We most definitely feel we do the right thing with the money. I don't know of anyone in the world that's getting more for the dollar. We tell people what we do with the money and that's what we do, and I'm very proud of that. Of course we welcome an investigation."

One of Swaggart's skills is shifting from Mr. Swaggart the businessman to brother Swaggart the preacher.

His crusades commence with a few "Jesus is the sweetest name I know" and quite a few "glories to God." Whereupon Jimmy says, "We need your help tonight. The very best that you can do we will deeply appreciate."

In order to endow this ritual with a sense of sanctity, Swaggart tells them "to bow your heads please. Now I would ask that every person here give as much as they can give and you will be blessed. We ask it all in Jesus's name, amen and amen. If you've got a check, make it out to Jimmy Swaggart Ministries and thank you so very, very much." Swaggart asks for money to feed the poor and hungry and to support his television productions. Sometimes you might find it hard to tell whether he is on television to raise money or raising money to go on television.

*We don't feel dancing is proper, because we feel*

## Swaggart hasn't gone completely Hollywood, but he does give autographs on Bibles.

*like it creates between a man and a woman a situation that brings up lustful desires and has probably contributed an awful lot towards licentiousness and adultery, breaking up a lot of homes.*

—Jimmy Swaggart

In 1983 Jimmy Swaggart gathered his executives together for a very special meeting. He made the announcement that Debbie Swaggart, his son's wife, had been having an affair with one of the musicians in the band for some time. The man, Dwain Johnson, had been fired. Donnie and Debbie would be separating, said Swaggart.

George Journigan, who attended the meeting with a dozen other executives, remembers Jimmy as being incredibly angry.

"We all believed adultery was a serious sin and Swaggart certainly didn't feel comfortable with it, but I would say his reaction at that period of time was an expression of anger more than anything else. Obviously, at that point the plan was for her not to be involved with the Ministries anymore, and some sort of explanation would have to be given to the staff."

"Oh," said Dr. Suln, who also attended, "I knew about this stuff way, way back." Dr. Suln and others said they knew of the scandal long before Jimmy confronted it.

One former Swaggart executive recalls: "I heard they became unglued. They drove Dwain Johnson out of town, but they tried to hush it up and they kept it hushed up even though everybody knew. Somehow they kept it out of print."

The same person went on to say: "I believe Jimmy was called by God to preach the gospel. I really believe that. But I also believe, like any man, he has feet of clay, and his family has been a bad influence on him. I tried to warn him about the adultery, but I might as well have shot myself in the head because it didn't do any good."

"I would think," said Journigan, "that there was not one in the Ministries who would approach Jimmy and say, 'Hey . . . look, you made an announcement, you said she was leaving, but she didn't, so what's going on?'"

Nobody said preachers and their families have to live the way they preach.

In the Court Parish of East Baton Rouge there was a lawsuit, file number 258525: Jimmy Swaggart Evangelistic Association vs. Janet Lynn Breeland, wife of Dwain Johnson. Jimmy wanted Dwain and his wife, who were living on Ministries property, out. Off of his land, out of his city.

The Johnsons eventually left town. Where to, nobody knows. Nobody would discuss it with me without discomfort.

The affair must have been pretty tough on Jimmy, who preaches so loudly and bitterly against adultery.

Every junior evangelist knows that after the Lord, the next most important institution is the family. Maybe the Lord is one of the reasons Debbie and Donnie and Frances and Jimmy stick together and pretend they are the happiest most united family on the face of this earth, knowing it's also good for the business.

According to the Ministries' public relations office, they don't have to pretend. "They actually have a very happy married life," I was told by Gus Weill, who called me to find out "what's all this about you asking questions regarding Donnie's marriage?" He said that if there were any problems between Debbie and Donnie, they "never came to my attention." Weill reassures me that he has "done some checking around the Ministries, talked to some people," and officially, at least, all Swaggart virtue is intact.

So, since all problems have miraculously vanished, brother Swaggart is still preaching against every sin, and he won't let anyone spoil his preaching.

But adultery is a very common sin, and preaching against it gave Jimmy a lot of power over his followers. Talking of adultery gave him the chance to use his "I'm pure and clean and you are nothing but filth" technique. This technique is a common means to make believers feel inferior to their preacher. They would come from all over the state to listen to brother Swaggart, and he starts with "America in the last 20 years has shaken its fist in the face of God. There is no fear of God. You are in sin, America, you're in nothing but deep deep sin!"

Then he tells them tales from his journeys around the world. He gives them the "Stalin experience," goes through the hunger in Ethiopia, and ends up screaming, "You have to shout: I'm no good, I can't save myself, I'm rotten, I'm filth."

The man that's going to make you finally admit out loud how filthy you are was born 51 years ago. In order to understand the growth of this evangelist who speaks in tongues when filled with the holy spirit, you must look for his spiritual roots.

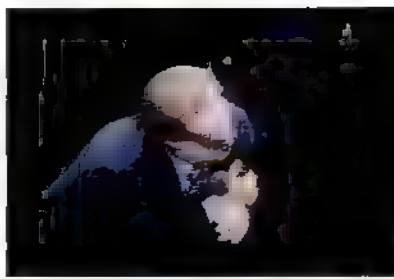
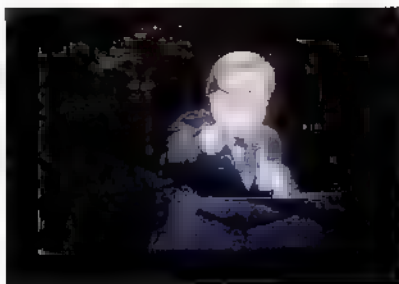
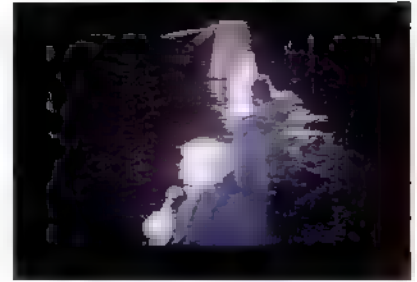
Born in Ferriday, Louisiana, a small poor town located 90 miles north of Baton Rouge, Jimmy Swaggart's parents were bootlegging whiskey, trying to survive the winter before their first child came into the world. Shortly after little Jimmy was born, his father was arrested for cattle rustling.

In 1944, when the world was still at war, nothing much was happening in Ferriday, until that morning when the Swaggarts' son began prophesying. He claims to have prophesied Hiroshima.

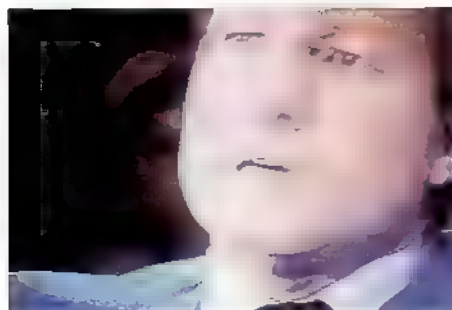
"The first time the Lord spoke through me prophetically, I didn't know what was happening. I felt like I

Above: Swaggart's crusades end with the congregation coming onstage, led by Ministries employees planted in the crowd. Right: Swaggart's animated television performance.





**There's no place for beliefs other than Swaggart's, and there's no mercy for you if you don't surrender your heart and soul and at least some money to the Swaggart Ministries.**



Andy Freiberg

was standing outside my body. Then I began to describe exactly what I saw . . . a powerful bomb destroying an entire city . . . tall buildings crumbling . . . people screaming. A year later, when the two Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were destroyed by an atomic blast, nobody thought my prophecies were childish."

It was music that first brought Minnie Bell and her husband to church. They went to a service for the first time in their lives only after their son was born.

Jimmy says that "Minnie Bell had been to three funerals as a child, but other than that, neither of my parents knew anything about God." But since they loved the music, they went to church.

Jimmy, obviously a very grown-up two-year-old, remembers clearly: "Night after night, as they sat through the services, the spirit of the Lord dealt with them. Daddy was deeply troubled about accepting Jesus Christ as his savior, but felt he had to give up some of his plans for making money. Daddy couldn't take the conflict and decided to run."

The family moved to Rio Hondo, Texas, where Minnie Bell and Jimmy's little brother Donnie came down with pneumonia. Four days later the baby died, and Jimmy recalls his father's cry: "I know my baby would be alive if I had lived for God. It's all my fault." Minnie Bell and her husband, both high-tempered people, were fighting continuously and screaming at each other in front of the child.

According to Jimmy, everything changed after Jimmy's father surrendered his life to Christ. The family was happy. Life became fun, and God spoke to little Jimmy every once in a while.

There is not a beat of humor in Jimmy's descriptions of his childhood. He has taken himself very seriously since he was a boy and, according to him, so has everyone else.

At eight he decided to follow Jesus. He gave his heart to the Lord and to prove his loyalty he decided never to go to the movies again. "Basically, I was the only young person my age trying to live for the Lord," he says seriously.

*My cousin Jerry Lee Lewis and I are very close. The last time I saw him was in July, but I love him very, very much and I think he's a tremendous talent and we pray for him constantly.*

—Jimmy Swaggart



Clockwise from left: Crusade congregation enraptured; Swaggart on TV; Swaggart Ministries headquarters in Baton Rouge.

Jimmy's faith was not always as strong as it is now. In adolescence his path wasn't as clearly marked as he might have wished, and God didn't always seem responsive to Jimmy's search for oneness with Him.

Ten-year-old Jerry Lee was living a life of sin when Jimmy, six months his senior, joined him to see how deeply in sin he himself could slide.

They began breaking into local stores and stealing. Their challenge of the eternal powers went on for a while until the one night Jimmy didn't go—naturally Jerry Lee got caught, was taken to jail, and his father had to bail him out for several hundred dollars. In his autobiography, *To Cross a River*, Jimmy's patronizing descriptions of his cousin Jerry Lee Lewis present the singer in an unflattering light.

It was Jimmy who talked Jerry Lee's teacher into changing Jerry Lee's grades so that he could pass to the fifth grade. Jimmy was the one who had to defend Jerry Lee's honor in the constant schoolyard fights.

Swaggart looks back on his fairly normal adolescent years as a time of sin. For someone who at four years of age was prophesying about the future of the world, it must have been a bit difficult and dull to

accept such normal stages of rebellion and growth.

But eventually Jimmy found Frances and his way back to the Lord. "Something broke within me and a flow began. I felt God was moving powerfully within me. I felt it coming just as it had when I was a child. It seemed to flow through my heart and I began speaking in tongues. It was truly living water. Finally I leaped to my feet praising God in a language I had not learned. Everybody was shouting and praising God with me."

*You turn on your television set, Christian Television, and most Pentecostals today specialize in miracles, and there is very little Bible preaching in the world. If you'll buy my tape, you will get a miracle. You send me a gift of \$100 and you will have a miracle. Miracles. I believe in miracles, but miracles don't have nothing to do with Jesus Christ.*

—Jimmy Swaggart, Washington, D.C., crusade

Frances Anderson Swaggart, who is described as both the real force behind the man and the sharp business brain of the Ministries, was 15 when she married 17-



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10/19 Fresno, CA	11/25 Milwaukee, WI
10/20 Santa Cruz, CA	11/26 Cincinnati, OH
10/21 Portland, OR	11/27 Rock Island, IL
10/22 Davis, CA	11/28 Chicago, IL
10/23 Detroit, MI	11/29 Madison, WI
10/24 San Rafael, CA	12/10 Toronto, ON
10/25 San Luis Obispo, CA	12/11 Richmond, BC
10/26 Seattle, WA	12/12 Richmond, VA
10/27 Los Angeles, CA	12/13 Washington, DC
10/28 Boston, MA	12/14 New York, NY
10/29 Atlanta, GA	12/15 Washington, DC
10/31 San Francisco, CA	12/16 New York, NY
11/1 New York, NY	12/17 New York, NY

FISHBONE  
"IN YOUR FACE"  
IN YOUR MIND  
IN YOUR PANTS  
AND ON COLUMBIA  
RECORDS AND  
CASSETTES

year-old Jimmy Swaggart.

Thirty-four years later, after living happily ever since, Jimmy Swaggart told me he didn't recommend young marriages. "We were very, very young and it worked for us, but it's too young. I don't recommend it. You're just a kid at that age. She was more mature than I was. I was 17, but I had the mind of a two-year-old."

That didn't prevent the Lord from showing Jimmy Swaggart how much He liked him and wanted him to live healthily and comfortably. A goal that the Lord achieved by creating a series of convincing miracles.

"When Frances and I first went into evangelistic work, I became sick with pneumonia. That's the only time I've ever really been sick, to be frank with you, and I was in the hospital for several days. I then went home and I was still sick and this was probably a week after. It was on a Wednesday night that I believe the Lord touched me and healed me because I improved immediately. Before then, I could not hold anything in my stomach, and an immediate improvement I would have to attribute to the Lord, which I did.

"Then there was the second miracle. My cousin Jerry Lee, he and Presley had just started in the music business and was making an awful lot of money, so I asked the Lord: 'Lord, well, he's having to take most of it and give it to the government for income tax, and if he would buy me a car it would be deductible, and please lay it on his heart to do that.' And he did it and I was everlastingly thankful for that.

"Then something went wrong and the valve was burned, I guess, or something like that. I took it to a garage and they said it would cost something like \$50 or \$70 to fix it. I didn't have any money and I didn't know what to do. So I went and parked it under a tree and talked to the Lord. 'Lord,' I said. 'I don't know what to do. I don't have any money to fix the car.' So I told the Lord my predicament and asked him to help me with the situation. All I can tell you is that I got back in the car and it was no longer knocking and I never did have to have it fixed. It ran smoothly for months until I sold it."

**I**n the Washington crusade, like in other crusades, Jimmy has his whole family with him. Here I saw how forgiving brother Jimmy can be when his cousin Jerry Lee or his daughter-in-law Debbie are at stake. About 10,000 to 15,000 people attend the meeting, and Jimmy gives them not only the big-time religion but also the big-time family routine.

Donnie goes on stage and says, "And here he is, my dad, your evangelist, Jimmy Swaggart!!!"

Then Jimmy comes out and he says, "Frances, come on out here." She comes out, very well dressed with her green shoes and green jacket matching her green eye makeup.

She mostly praises her husband and says, "Hallelujah. Hallelujah, praise the Lord. Praise the Lord."

Thousands applaud and scream with her: "Glory to God, Glory to God." Next Jimmy says, "Debbie, would you stand up?" She stands up, looking extremely beautiful with her snowy-white dress and her shy smile.

Jimmy says adoringly: "She is the prettiest daughter-in-law in the land and just about the sweetest in the whole wide world too." You can tell the audience loves it. "Praise the Lord," they cry. They are happy to see their shepherd surrounded with his devoted loving family. He's a good mentor, they think, with tears in their eyes.

Jimmy knows how to get his crowd emotional. He repeats his sentences. His voice breaks. He puts tears in his own eyes.

He preaches against the everyday lifestyle that these people know. No beer, he yells at them. Beer is a sin. Alcohol is a sin. Dancing is a sin, even going to the movies is a sin, and no music is of any good unless it's his gospel music. The only thing that's good for you is Jesus. Only Jesus.



Andy Freiberg

And if you find Jesus and you try hard to please him, it's not enough. Brother Jimmy wants you to stay away from your old friends.

"But you tell me 'I can't do my friends this way. What will they think? What will they say? How will I win them to Jesus?' But listen to this preacher tonight. You won't win them to Jesus, they will win you back to the pit.

"You preach emotionalism, Jimmy," you tell me, 'I'm not like that, I'm a different person.' So get your personality changed! There is no other way. This is the only way."

Jimmy makes them feel bad, but good. He gives them the feeling they are God's children kidnapped, and now finally they are on their way home.

Klarisa Moyal is home already. Born in Morocco, she lived in Israel, Paris, and Virginia. This lonely Jewish woman is not lonely anymore. She found Jesus. The "Lord came to my living room," she told me. "And He inspired me to write a ten-page letter to him, and that's my testimony. The Lord came and saved my life."

*Do you realize that in most churches in America you couldn't get saved if you wanted to? Do you realize that in most churches in America, if you raised a hand and said, "Hallelujah," they'd throw you out? Do you realize that most churches in America, if you came up and told the pastor, "I want you to know me," he'll look at you like you have taken leave of your senses? Do you know that in most churches in America you can drink and adulterate and fornicate and swine and swirl and swine and still be a member in good standing and watch them baptize in the name of the Holy Ghost? No wonder Jesus, in the temple of the son of David, and that bunch of hypocritical Pharisees, said, "Don't upset the decorum of our service. It is very reserved here now and don't you break the silence." But Jesus looked at them with anger. I mean, he was frightening mad. He wasn't like some pussy-footing (inaudible; drowned by crowd). He said, "Stretch all of you in here!" The power of heaven rolled down from the hills!*

*I don't go to ball games, but if I did, I'd expect them to play ball. And, if I go to church, I expect you*

*to preach. (Applause)*

—Jimmy Swaggart, Washington D.C. crusade

*I don't have as much trouble with the pornographers or the homosexuals or the drug pushers or the beer distributors as I do out of religion. There are more hard-hearts in religion today than anywhere else.*

—Jimmy Swaggart

Jimmy Swaggart would like you to join him. He doesn't care if you are white, black, or yellow; if you are Jewish, Protestant, or Hindu. As long as you are willing to convert, he will be there to get you. With his Rolex and his kind, loving smile, he will be there waiting for you to let your soul off guard, even for one precious moment, and he will be there to grab it from you.

If you look into the phenomenon, you see a school dropout, an expert in marketing, a fundamentalist, a man who has the power to move thousands of people with one word. With one pointed finger.

Swaggart says he reads *Time* and *Newsweek* and watches the news on television, but his idiomatic world doesn't seem to be affected. In his world of notions, Andy Warhol is defined as "the man with the Coca-Cola cans." Contemporary art is not of any importance because you can hang it upside down. Oral sex is the ultimate sin because, apparently, it leads to homosexuality. Psychotherapy is witchcraft. AIDS is God's punishment to the world that accepts gays.

Swaggart is not by any means an unpredictable product of the conservative, religious South. What is frightening is that so many people are ready and willing to buy this type of instant salvation. Swaggart just offers one more deal to the people so caught up in the process of shopping that they forget to examine what they're buying, or even why.

In America today, millions of men and women, lost in the system, searching for something substantial to save or distract them, fall prey to drug dealers, cults, and Swaggarts.

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Julie Van Der Run.



# General PUBLIC



## hand to MOUTH

features the single  
**too much or NOTHING**



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# THERE'S A RIOT GOING ON

In L.A., the rock gangs and the cops are looking for the same thing. Trouble.

The morgue where they delivered young Gilbert Cole's body is located in downtown L.A. in the same hospital where they film the opening shot of *General Hospital*. The guy who runs the night shift was bored, as anybody who works midnights in the morgue would be, so when my photographer friend Gary and I called, he invited us to come on over, even though he hinted more than once that it was slightly against the rules.

The first room we entered looked like the office of a plumbing supply house. An old oak desk was flush against the wall, yellow walls, which I found strange, since hospitals are always white. I guess they need to cheer people up in here. Lots of booklets and papers everywhere. Most of these reported on the dead that had arrived that day. Gilbert Cole's papers had already been moved to the coroner's office; the morgue only gets these bodies when they die in the hospital, which is an indication of the mistake the paramedics made. When Gilbert Cole collapsed at the L.A. Street Scene festival on Sunday, September 28, 1986, it was originally believed that

Article by Annette Stark

Photography by Gary Leonard



**"I've seen cops beating the hell out of kids. They're lying on the ground, these kids, and the cops are beating them."**

he had passed out from a drug overdose. He was brought to this hospital, pronounced dead, and delivered to the morgue.

Cole was 25, a Chicano, and very clean-cut. By the time the morgue gets a body, it's been stripped down, but Gilbert Cole was still wearing his jewelry. Gold neck and wrist chains. "Real nice stuff," said the morgue guy. They knew he was from a decent family because his brother, an attorney, had shown up asking questions.

Gilbert Cole was shot in the back at the L.A. Street Scene on Sunday night. The cops don't know who shot him or why. They only know that punk rockers started a riot the day before. The L.A. mayor blames the entire weekend's episodes on one rock band—the Ramones, whose nonappearance had triggered a melee—and a subculture of kids. Gilbert Cole wasn't a punk rocker. He was not hit with a beer bottle, he was shot with a gun. It wasn't on Saturday, when the kids were tearing up the stage because their favorite band had failed to show. Cole was shot on Sunday, while watching some Puerto Ricans play pop music. It doesn't really matter whose fault it was. Gilbert Cole was lying naked on a slab in the morgue, still wearing his gold chains and bracelets and the L.A. County Coroner's contribution to his outfit—a toe tag. I bet he didn't really care.

Nobody's sure who's to blame. The cops blame the kids and the bands. The kids blame the bands, the lyrics, and the cops. The promoters blame everybody. Everybody blames the press, which, you can bet, is having a good time with all this. Meanwhile, the clubs keep closing, which ought to make anyone who isn't a kid, a band, a cop, or a promoter in L.A. happy. After all, when you live next door to a rock club and kids keep pissing on your lawn, your house is no longer worth one million dollars.

Everybody's sure of the reasons, however:

"These kids think that being in gangs is cool."—Detective Griffin, LAPD

"They riot at concerts when they don't like a particular band, like Run-DMC."—Chris, a high school

student

"Some bands, like Black Flag, encourage riots at their shows. These guys have degrees in psychology. They know what they're doing to publicize themselves."—an L.A. promoter

"Too many rock bands, too many punk groups at these events, attract an undesirable element."—Tom Houston, L.A. Deputy Mayor

"These are not L.A. kids. These kids come from other places, like they did in the '60s, because the drugs are more available, and the lure of Hollywood is strong."—Commander Booth, personal assistant to L.A. police commissioner Darryl Gates

"They have no museums to go to."—Gary, our photographer

The episodes are violent and memorable. Riots at the L.A. Palladium (cops controlled the crowds with firehoses), at Black Flag concerts, at the MTV music awards (the cops used tear gas that time), gang wars between punk rock bands, and the highly publicized recent riot at a Run-DMC concert.

The old Elks Lodge was the scene of the first riot: two adjacent ballrooms, one hosting a wedding reception, and the other a concert featuring the GoGo's, DOA, Plung, and other punk bands. There were at least 600 enthusiastic punk rock fans to greet the wedding guests as they filed out of the second ballroom. Words were exchanged. Someone threw a bottle.

Eyewitnesses still call it a police riot, though. Because things did not get out of hand until the cops arrived. "The next thing I knew," recalls a punk rocker, "the cops were rushing upstairs, yelling to kids to get out of the way. They were clubbing and hitting everyone. Lots of kids got hurt." About 100, to be exact.

Within a year, Elks Lodge was closed. Every club in Orange County's been closed. The Starwood in West Hollywood was closed in 1982. Someone was stabbed in the Rock Corp in the Valley. It also was closed. The Whiskey was shut down for a while and turned into a bank. Punk rock clubs out here have a short lifespan. And the violence that contributed to these closings has spilled over into the local high schools, where administrators recently requested that metal detectors be installed in the buildings.

The cops remember their clashes with kids with equal clarity, citing the same incidents to prove their points. My phone call to LAPD Information was interesting, to say the least. "Which riot do you want to know about?" asked the woman who answered. "The Palladium, last week on the beach? . . . the high schools? . . . Run-DMC?"

"Any old riot will do," I said.

Detective Griffin from LAPD was clear in his recollections. "We've got squads to deal with the heavy metal kids, the devil worshippers like Motley Crue, and the punk rockers." I was learning that the average cop in L.A. knows as much about music as the average kid.

Obviously, they believe they have to. "Kids here are more militant than in New York," said Griffin. "They think it's cool to belong to gangs."

They do. Suicidal Tendencies is a punk rock band: two Mexicans, one black guy, and a white kid who grew up in the slums of Venice Beach, California. The band's been around for four years, its popularity expanding recently beyond the Santa Monica and West Hollywood neighborhoods where they grew up. They've attracted a "gang" of almost 1000 rampant fans, the Suicidals. These kids come from the tough neighborhoods, the real inner-city gang life few L.A. kids ever know. Along with their popularity, the stories about Suicidal Tendencies and the gang have grown to almost mythic proportions. One New York

*If you're looking for trouble, L.A.'s the right place. Previous page: The post-show show of force after a James Brown concert. Above: Cops have an illegal hold on the situation at Venice Beach.*



The Michelob Light Guide To Making It In The Real World.

# OVERDRESS FOR SUCCESS

**What's In:**  
Imported cottons,  
expatriated wools,  
GoreTex.

**Snorkel**—a must when  
you're in over your head.

**Turbo-Prop  
Backpack** to take  
you to the top.

**Padded Shoulders**  
turn nerds into  
Chairman-of-the-  
Board material.

**Flak Jacket/Vest**  
protects against  
back-stabbing.

**.357 Magnum** keeps  
those subordinates in line.

**Shin Guards** protect  
against fellow, upwardly  
mobile executives.

**Steel-Toed Track Spikes**  
don't let your toes get  
trampled in the fast lane.

**Rearview Mirror** lets you keep  
an eye on the competition.

**Radio Wristwatch**  
provides instant  
music for the old  
song-and-dance.

**Heavily Starched Collar**  
discourages sticking your  
neck out.

**Reversible Sportcoat**  
for when you're doing  
your job and the  
boss's too.

**What's Out:**  
Polyester, florals,  
latex/rubber  
fashions.

**Tight Underwear**  
keeps you smiling all day.

**Cut-Off Slacks** are more comfortable  
when the heat's on.

Expensive  
**Exotic-Hide Briefcase**  
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lose yours.

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**The cops wait on horses and on foot in formation, and advance in lines.**



promoter refused to put me in touch with them. "Why give those assholes any publicity because they cause so much trouble out there?"

A New York musician remembers his first confrontation with the Suicidals in L.A. He was 16 and small for his age. They beat him up anyway, for no reason other than he was in a "rival band" that did not play punk rock. The next time he ran into them he was older—18—had muscles, better fighting skills, and the advantage of being in New York, his home turf. As his friends watched, the kid grabbed the leader of the gang, dragged him downstairs to the CBGB's bathroom (a horrible experience in itself), and flushed his head down the toilet.

Now, when his band plays L.A., he said, they wait with death threats outside the club. He's not scared, not really, but he didn't want his name used because he's not stupid, either.

Ron Peterson, manager and promoter of Suicidal Tendencies, did not deny the stories around the band but embellished them and told me a few of his own. He claimed that the entire downtown L.A. music scene is controlled by the Suicidal Tendencies gang.

"It's part of their lifestyles," Peterson explained. "They're a bunch of street fighting guys. Last week at a show, some kids came up out of nowhere and punched Louie, the bass player, right on the side of his head. Louie chased one down and the guy tried to get off the stage and run away. But Louie was like the long arm of the law. He just grabbed the guy back from the audience and started socking him. I tried to break it up, but when Louie's hitting someone, it's for a reason."

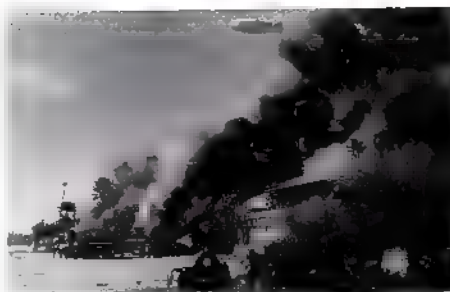
"So Suicidal Tendencies doesn't instigate the fights," I asked.

"Well," he laughs, "in some instances. . ."

"Are the followers rougher than the band members?"

"Maybe as a group, but Suicidal Tendencies is a bunch of over-200-pound, street fighting, badass big boys. They're not your typical run-of-the-mill rock stars in spandex."

But "these guys have to be real careful when going



Myung J. Chun

to Long Beach [the location of Fenders, a rock club that is the site of constant episodes of violence], because the skinheads [fans of hardcore music] dominate that area."

But in a second interview, Suicidal Tendencies band leader Mike Muir refuted their initial stories, said that there was no gang activity around the band, and insisted the entire thing was a publicity ploy. "We thought [the stories about being a violent gang] sounded good, but it isn't true." One reason may be that kids are too afraid to attend the shows.

"The stories about us are so terrible that only our diehard fans will attend," says Muir. "Anyone who doesn't love us stays home, or if they do show, they see all our fans, dressed like us [in the uniform that resembles the Chicano Street gangs of Venice Beach] and they assume we're a gang. All these upper-middle-class punk rockers, if they ever faced a real gang, they'd run for their lives."

Muir admits that there was trouble in the past; he was arrested several times, mostly for drinking or hanging out, but he says that now he's learned. He hasn't had any problems with the cops in years because he "knows they're waiting. I know how they are."

"How they are" is poised for trouble with these kids.

Music is at the center of this violence, and it is through music that the gangs distinguished themselves. The "poseur" gang dominates Hollywood—the trash-can shops along Melrose Avenue and the area around Fairfax High School. Hardcore skinhead gangs control Long Beach. Suicidals reportedly control Venice, Santa Monica, and downtown L.A.

If the California gang wars are a figment of the press's and the LAPD's imagination, it certainly has roots in some horrible realities. The violence and the riots are real. Nobody imagines well enough to furnish film clips of such fantasies on the six o'clock news. The incident that kicked off the schools' request for metal detectors was a murder. At Fairfax High School, a visiting graduate was shot by another student. Ron Peterson suspects that it was the work of the "poseur" gang.

L.A. is a funny city. It's not sheltered, it's sort of almost there, and the kids are not exactly naive. They know what hip is, and sometimes it must just seem only slightly beyond their reach. Many kids still have the prejudices they acquired from their parents, prejudices unavoidable when you are rich and live in segregated areas. If Suicidal Tendencies has any defense at all, any way of explaining the anarchy they are accused of creating, it is that initially they were the victims.

"We had a lot of trouble when we started," Mike explained, and you begin to understand what he's about. "The upper-middle-class white punk rockers hated us. They came around the band to start trouble, because we were poor, came from the worst neighborhoods, and wore the clothes of the Chicano and Mexican street gangs. We stood for the minorities."

So they fought back. "Black eyes go away," he said reflectively. "But if you buckle down to someone who's

*In the war zone, the situation is so out of control that everyone has mobilized. Top: Punk gangs battle one another in an L.A. club. Above: A police car burns in Huntington Beach. Opposite: A one-armed man is arrested for beating up a punk fan.*



picking on you, the mental scars stay with you a long time."

This attitude also expresses the average L.A. kid's feelings toward the average L.A. cop. It also explains why kids come to L.A. to find trouble, much in the way they went to Berkeley and other California campuses to riot in the late '60s. It's not, as Commander Booth says, that they "come here because the lure of Hollywood is strong." Punk rockers have no fantasies of being the next Greta Garbo. But face it, if you're looking for a fight, where the hell would you go? Would you go to a city where a police officer has to account for his every dirty deed? Or would you go to L.A., where all you need to do to fight with a cop is spit where he walks?

The Ramones don't really want to think about riots. They've often got troubles of their own. Twelve years of being the greatest rock 'n' roll band in the world doesn't leave you much free time. Which is why when Mill Petty, who promotes bands for the L.A. Street Scene, asked the Ramones to play with four gigs left in five days on their L.A. tour, the band said a polite but firm "No."

After that, Seymour Stein, president of Sire Records (the Ramones' record company), said no. Warner Bros., their distributor, said no. Gary Kurfirst, band manager, also said no. Just to make things official, Monte Melnick, tour manager for the Ramones, said no. Nobody said "maybe."

The Street Scene people, not understanding the meaning of the word "no," advertised that the Ramones were going to play. Maybe it was an error (as the Street Scene people later claimed), or perhaps it

## Music is at the center of the violence, and it is through music that the gangs distinguish themselves.

throwing things around. "They were angry. There were only about a hundred kids, and all they were doing, really, was throwing bottles and tearing things up." Their violence was not directed at each other, or others in the audience."

Nevertheless, the cops, who had been circling the action all day, watching bored from overpasses and atop horses, moved in. Over the next two days there were two shootings (one resulting in Gilbert Cole's death), several stabbings, and about 80 injuries (to cops, horses, and kids).

Footage of the riot ran hourly on the news Monday evening and all day Tuesday, showing kids being kicked by cops, kids being beaten by clubs, kids being pushed and thrown. You did not see kids beating up cops and horses. You heard the reprimand of the mayor, the deputy mayor, and various patrolmen. "Punk rockers cause all the trouble out here," was the theme of the day. It was widely agreed that the Ramones' failure to show resulted in both days' worth of trouble. But when Warner's threatened to sue on behalf of the band over accusations that the group had reneged on a promise to appear, the Ramones got a retraction the following

calls the cops, when a neighbor calls them, they arrive. They arrive in helicopters, helmeted, on foot. The helicopters hover and a voice calls out to the crowd, "Disperse."

"We wanted to disperse," said Brendan Mullen, owner of the Club Lingerie, a dinosaur around here because it's managed to stay open through years of trouble. Brendan is talking about the recent Cramps riot at the L.A. Palladium, the one where cops used firehoses on the exiting crowd. "Yeah, we wanted to disperse, but in a crowd that large, where the hell do you go?"

Looking fearfully to the day when this music would be a dinosaur, with no clubs left to showcase bands, Brendan said, "You're not going to drag all this up again in the press, are you? The more it's written about, the more it keeps happening."

Trouble is that it's so commonplace in California that no one writes about it, and it goes on anyway.

"You don't really know what's going on when you're playing," says Peterson. "You see bottles being thrown around, but that happens everywhere. They warn you to be real careful when you're playing, though. When you walk outside, you realize why."

Outside, the cops wait on horses and on foot in line formation, and when they advance into the crowd, they move in lines. Overhead, you hear the horrible racket of the helicopters, which adds to the confusion of the departing crowds. Sometimes, like at the Ramones concert at the Palladium two years ago, the kids outside, many who were not fans but just waiting, were hyped-up and rowdy, shouting and breaking windows of nearby stores. They knew what the cops were waiting for, and were more than happy to oblige.

"I've seen cops beating the shit out of these kids," says one L.A. musician. (He'd rather not have the band mentioned, because reminding promoters that there's trouble at your shows makes it hard for a band to get bookings.) "They're lying on the ground, these kids, and cops are beating and kicking them. Everywhere you see kids hurt and bleeding. I've even seen them beating up girls!"

"One kid was sitting on the curb holding his leg. It was bleeding real bad. The cop kept hitting him and yelling, 'Get up.' The kid couldn't get up. He was crying in pain, his leg was busted up so bad. He couldn't even move."

Police "procedure" in these matters appears to be that when a crowd does not move, you do anything to move them. When the kids don't move, the cops can start hitting. When I asked Commander Booth at what point the LAPD considers a situation dangerous enough to intervene, he replied, "When the first bottle is thrown."

When the first bottle is thrown. If New York City police arrived on the scene when the first bottle, the second, or the fifth bottle was thrown, CBGB's and the Ritz would be police precincts by now.

So what the hell is going on in California? Nasty habits. Everyone's got them. The situation has gotten so out of control that all involved are acting reflexively. The cops mobilized against the kids. Now, the average L.A. cop on the street isn't exactly Archie Bunker. He's more like Archie Bunker's son who joined the army. According to Commander Booth, he's in his late 20s, well paid ("higher than New York"), and from a middle-class family. A lot of them look like young John Waynes. Brendan Mullen added that "They can't handle anything that is integrated."

They don't understand the poor, the blacks, the kids, and the crowds, or anything that looks different than they do. Because they are young, they panic easily. But more important, because they are middle class, they respond to the middle-class cry to clean up the neighborhoods, even though they are making it clean of kids (as if that were really possible). And, as one kid put it, "They are beating up their children."

If you look at it from the LAPD's point of view, they



was designed to draw attention to the festival. But why ask the Ramones anyway? Everybody's always yelling that the punk rock bands bring all the trouble. Social Distortion was not invited. Surely the promoters didn't think that in an area hot with trouble, the Ramones—the band that invented punk—would be hosting a Tupperware party.

According to Patrick Bacchi, promoter of the Club Metro, who witnessed the Street Scene riot on Saturday, when the kids learned that their favorite band had failed to show, they jumped up onstage and started

day. It was not on page one. It was sort of an apology: the Street Scene officials said they had made "a clerical error."

But the press, the cops, and the mayor's office did not apologize for blaming an entire weekend's worth of trouble on the Ramones. They said nothing further on the matter.

The vision of cops beating kids stayed with me. I asked around and discovered it was the order of the day. Everyone told the same story. When a club owner



have a lot of money invested in "kid control." Detective Griffin made that clear when he explained the different squads for different musical interest groups. (Commander Booth denied this emphatically.) There's no way to justify all that time and money spent if you don't call even minor incidents "riots" and blame entirely unrelated incidents, like Gilbert Cole's shooting, on punk rockers.

But the punk rockers at the Street Scene on Sunday appeared calm enough. Most stood blocks away from the crowd on corners and complained that the absence of punk bands at the festival was "sort of sad."

It was. The whole thing is pretty damn sad. Punk bands forming gangs to retaliate is sadder still. But I guess if you're a kid and seven of your friends stand by watching the eighth getting clubbed and kicked around for throwing a bottle on the floor, you're going to get sore. You're going to get your friends together and mobilize in return. If you don't know any better, because it's all you've seen, it looks like the cops have declared war. Violence breeds violence. Intelligent people have known it for years. Nasty habits.

*"After the show we went around back. We were in the parking lot. First we heard the cops, then we saw them, ten in a row, and they were just advancing. Soon they were on the scene. There were helicopters overhead. I knew something was gonna happen. There was something in the air. These cops have files on bands like Black Flag. They know when they should*

*show up. They're ready.*

*"But it was the mellowest punk crowd I've ever seen. I saw the cops and started saying, 'This is not a fascist state, damn it. This is America!' And the cops were like the Raiders' defensive line. They just charged.*

*"Everybody's yelling 'run!' I didn't want to. So I turned around and SMACK, a billy club to the side of my head. So then I figured I'd better run, 'cause cops were just everywhere. They started clubbing me all over the place. I got up off the ground and this rookie comes after me. I ran and he chased me. Some punk rocker kept yelling, 'Come on, bro, you're gonna get killed.'"*

—Simon Smallwood's account of L.A. Palladium riot

"You know we don't have trouble everywhere," says Commander Booth. "We never have incidents at the Coliseum. The promoters cooperate with the police. They hire great security guards. They put a clause on the back of each ticket, stating the right to stop and search each kid who comes to a show."

As for the security forces most L.A. clubs hire, these guys have to wake up so they can die. But who can blame promoters? Why spend the money for elaborate security when the cops are so willing to arrive at the drop of a bottle?

At the punk rock club Fenders, the guards didn't even know the layout of the club. They kept sending me to the bathroom or the kitchen when I was trying to get to the main concert room. It's interesting since

## Kids come to L.A. to find trouble, much the way they went to Berkeley to riot in the late '60s.

Fenders is the constant scene of trouble.

The Fenders promoter, Gary Tovar, is a bundle of nerves. He needs Valium. You can't blame him, either. Backstage after a recent concert he repeatedly had to interrupt his post-concert chatting with the band to run to the back door and yell, "Get security out here."

The last time it paid off. Some kid lay on the floor, his head busted open.

"We'll have to send you to the hospital. You can't go home like that," Gary tried to explain to the kid. Gary was calmer now. The worst part was over. The best way to end this trouble, it seems, is when the trouble brings an end to itself.

The kid said no. The guards stood back. The kid just stood up, held his blond, bloodied head in his hand, rested his arm on his buddies, and stumbled out the door.

*We're on the List: The LAPD punk rock squad.*



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# Sommer Danger

THE NEW ALBUM FROM A-HA







# RHYTHM ATTACK

Article by Ellen Cannon Peck

The Fountainhead, the newest recruits in the Irish invasion, make electrified, aggressively danceable rock 'n' roll that defies you to sit still. Not bad for a band that began as two guys and a tape recorder.

The view from the top is lovely. To the east are Bray Head and the Irish Sea; to the south, the Wicklow Mountains. The house, tucked into the hills of the Dublin suburb of Killiney, is surrounded by flowers. A middle-aged woman is humming a tune while she putters in the garden. It's an almost perfect pastoral scene. But it is not a traditional Irish air that Nora Owens is humming; it's the pulsing rock 'n' roll booming from the hayloft-turned-rehearsal studio in her yard, where the Fountainhead are, as usual, working.

On their current and debut album, *The Burning Touch*, they have an aggressive dance song, "Rhythm Method," that has a bass line that vibrates and a guitar lead that sounds like an electrified snake charmer's seduction melody.

While many other Dublin bands have been boasting of their U2 connections and talking about the record deals they're about to sign, the Fountainhead have been composing the most infectious dance music ■ be heard anywhere in a long time. They produce a big, raw sound with surprising rhythms and emotional lyrics. The Fountainhead's music isn't ethereal or trad-sounding; it goes anywhere, any time, ■ reflection of the New Ireland, where young people are casting off the quaint Paddy-tipping-his-cap image of the Irish Tourist Board ads designed to entice Irish-Americans to visit their ancestors' homeland. Judging by the Green Wave of rock groups washing up on the shores of England and America, though, these young Irish aren't turning their backs on but expanding the worldwide reputation of the Irish as superior makers of music.

Steve Bolton, 28, and Pat O'Donnell, 24, the

founding members of the Fountainhead, aren't likely to be recognized on the street as rock 'n' rollers. On-stage and off, they wear ordinary shirts and jeans, and leather jackets as a defense against the Irish weather. Bolton's got deep-set eyes and dark and angular features that fit his reserved, soft-spoken demeanor, while O'Donnell's light Irish eyes and active face are a visual expression of his outgoing personality. As he talks, O'Donnell's eyelids shutter his green eyes as fast as an electronic camera shoots a high-action sequence, but after ■ burst of his "crack"—a term for talk used in Ireland long before the drug was known—he always provides an opening for his partner: "Isn't that right, Steve? What do you have to say about that?" Bolton's remarks are measured, seminal; if there's chat to be had, it will come from O'Donnell. Not surprisingly, O'Donnell writes the lyrics.

The talk coming from either of them is usually about the music. They aren't in this to be rock 'n' roll stars, but to do what they love: create music. So far, they are succeeding.

Since the release of *The Burning Touch* in May, the Fountainhead have been attracting praise from industry insiders and the music press. Though they have yet to have a hit record outside their homeland, they are building an audience on the strength of the music and, recently, their live performances. This says a lot for ■ band that originated as two guitarists backed by prerecorded tapes.

The Fountainhead (L-R): Pat O'Donnell, Steve Bolton.

## "Rhythm Method" was determined to be a hit, with or without promotion, with or without the band.

It began in 1982, when Pat O'Donnell and Steve Belton started composing on a four-track tape recorder in the house they shared. "We had fairly primitive gear," Belton says. "We had just one simple mono synth, a homemade drum machine, and a couple of guitars. And we used sounds from the radio and TV."

"Our later ideas have little bits of the old riffs," O'Donnell says. "We went back and used them again in new music."

Belton and O'Donnell know what it's like to be down and out—or damn near it. In 1981, Belton was on the dole, like so many of his countrymen, and O'Donnell worked in a stereo equipment store. While doing some production work for the Dublin glam rockers the Virgin Prunes, Belton and O'Donnell met Kieran Owens, an energetic young man who had been involved with the local music scene since the mid-'70s. Owens became their manager and promoter, and the Owens family turned over their renovated hayloft to the fledgling rock group.

In early 1984 the Fountainhead won the CBS/Evening Herald Cut-A-Disc competition. Their prize was 20 hours in Windmill Lane Studios, where they recorded "Rhythm Method." The record—on the Fountain label, created solely for the release of 2,000 copies—was a hit in Ireland, reaching No. 5 on the year-end chart of RTE, the national radio station. The Cartel in London was given a thousand records for distribution in the UK, Europe, and the States.

A few copies reached some alert radio stations in the U.S. The song was such a hard-driving dance tune that it took on a life of its own, determined to be a hit, with or without promotion, with or without the band. On the strength of the single, the Fountainhead signed a major contract with China Records (distributed by Chrysalis in the U.S.), the company Derek Green, the former head of A&M's UK division, recently started.

Brian Tench, who had just finished producing Kate Bush's *Hounds of Love* album, produced their debut album. "I think the record company would have been wary of letting us go in the studio without someone from their side, if you like," says Belton. "A lot of bands go into the studio with vast ideas, and that wasn't quite the case with us, but the production input was very good."

*The Burning Touch* establishes a sound that is the Fountainhead's own. "Feel It Now," the recently released single, is an upbeat dance tune with the Fountainhead trademark: a tough bass line, Belton's searing guitar solos, intricate drum rhythms, and O'Donnell's raspy, steamy vocals. "Faraway" is a slow, sensuous number that would be right at home on *Miami Vice*. But the Fountainhead's music is saved from sounding technological by the rawness of the guitars and vocals and the complexity of the music. The lyrics express simple slice-of-emotion pictures that complement the powerful rhythms and humanize the overall sound.

The Fountainhead still consisted of two guys and tapes. In order to tour, they needed to put together a real band. "We had this notion," Belton says, "that now that we had a record deal it would be easy to find musicians, there'd be queues of them. But in fact it wasn't quite that easy." They were competing with the Waterboys for the same bass player and drummer; eventually "we got the drummer and they got the bass player," says Belton. The drummer is Peter McKinney, and the bass player they added is Willie de Mange, who also plays keyboards and is a longtime friend of



Bill Cooper

O'Donnell's. The primary keyboardist is Phil Rennick. "He's probably the best actual player in the band," O'Donnell says, "he'd just never had experience playing rock music. He's very into jazz. But I think he finds us versatile enough that he enjoys it."

The Fountainhead—together just 10 days—made an auspicious debut in Dublin in May at the jobs awareness concert dubbed Self-Aid. The 12-hour concert at the Royal Dublin Society Showgrounds included such up-and-coming bands as In Tua Nua, Cactus World News, and Blue in Heaven as well as the superstars of Irish rock—Van Morrison, the Boomtown Rats, Elvis Costello, and, of course, U2. The Fountainhead had the misfortune of taking the stage just as Bob Geldof granted a press conference in the press building outside the main arena. Even the TV monitor showing the band onstage was turned off in the press room. But the 30,000 members of the record-buying and concertgoing public in the stadium went wild for the powerful set.

Three days after Self-Aid, everyone who's anyone on the Dublin music scene—except U2, who don't need to be seen to be in mind—is at Dobbins Wine Bar for a press party to announce upcoming concerts. There's Jim Aiken, the promoter, and here's RTE's well-respected DJ Dave Fanning. And in that booth are In Tua Nua, and near the food are Blue in Heaven. Unlike some of their peers, the Fountainhead are in the back garden doing an interview. Working.

After the interview, on the street, a rising-rock-star deliberation party takes place, as members of Blue in Heaven, In Tua Nua, and the Fountainhead discuss where to go for dinner. Some opt for a local pub; others decide to go home. Belton and O'Donnell, with two American journalists in tow, head for Captain America's, a hamburger joint on Grafton Street whose decor includes a six-foot replica of the Statue of Liberty. One of the Americans orders a Guinness, which is only served in bottles there.

"Don't ever drink Guinness in a bottle," O'Donnell

warns. "It's got too much fizz in it. In Ireland, Guinness six-packs are sold with syringes so you can draw off the extra carbonation they put in the bottled stuff to keep it fizzy." His eyes are twinkling. The journalist believes him. She orders a Bud, on tap. As the beers are served, a group enters the bar.

"Oh," Kieran Owens remarks, "it's U2 on the town without the wives."

Just an ordinary night at Captain America's in Dublin. The U2 entourage, including the roadies, and Adam, Larry, and Bono—with a six-foot staff in hand—head toward a large table in the rear of the restaurant. On their way, they stop by the Fountainhead table to exchange greetings. Dublin's music scene is so tight that everyone tends to know everyone, including the four who have focused enough attention on Ireland to make it possible for every band there to be heard. All are benefiting; some, like the Fountainhead, may create a style that will set them apart.

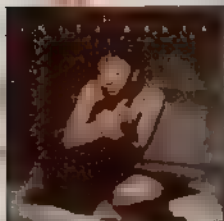
In the late summer, the band began playing dates in the UK, and the response was again favorable. A North American tour is scheduled to open in mid-November in Toronto and will include dates in Boston, New York, and Los Angeles.

O'Donnell is sitting in the poolroom at the Pink Elephant, Dublin's popular after-hours club, while members of Def Leppard shoot a game on the table. "Kieran takes care of all the excitement about the band," he says with a laugh. "I can't wait to get back in the studio and make another album." What about the tour? "That'll be exciting, but we've got so many new ideas we want to get down. . . ."

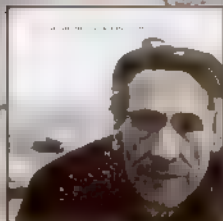
Belton's not at the Pink that night. He's probably home working on a new piece of music. At about one, O'Donnell says goodnight; he's got rehearsal in the morning. "Another big day tomorrow," is his half-hearted apology for leaving so early. Judging by the success the Fountainhead have garnered, there will be many more big days ahead.



# Before he made his list, he checked ours!



**ANITA BAKER**  
Rapture



**THE CURE**  
Standing On A Beach



**HOWARD JONES**  
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**BENJAMIN ORR**  
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**LINDA RONSTADT**  
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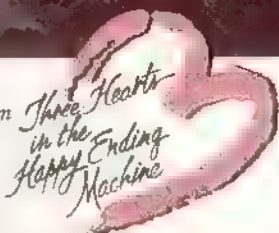
# D A R Y L H A L L

by Daryl Hall

He's had lots of hit records  
He has an apartment in the West Village NYC  
He has a farm in the country  
He spends a lot of time in England  
He drives a motorcycle  
He likes history  
He has studied magick  
He likes Indian food  
He believes in the power of the self  
He believes in Soul  
He's done some fighting in his life  
There are a lot of ministers in his family  
He's introspective  
He spends a lot of time thinking about  
the Big Picture  
He reads voraciously  
He's honest  
His triple great grandmother was  
a Revolutionary War spy  
He grew up with the ghetto  
He likes to shop  
He used to go to church  
He eats at Joe's  
He doesn't follow orders  
He draws cartoons  
He cooks outdoors a lot  
He believes in Soul  
He doesn't care about winning  
He's worried about censorship and  
organized pressure groups  
He likes cowboy boots  
He has no use for fools  
He's a nice guy  
His girlfriend is Sara  
His right lobe is over-developed  
He makes Real Ale  
He tries to think globally and act locally  
He flunked Freshman Biology  
He's old fashioned - he doesn't  
believe in marriage

He's a musician first  
He's everything else second

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# moving images

*In which Cisco and Egbert get the girl's-eye view.*

**CISCO:** Hi, I'm Gene Cisco, rock video critic of the *Middletown Courier*, and this is Roger Egbert, video critic of the *Middletown Clarion*.

**EGBERT:** This month At the Videos we'll be reviewing new ones from Van Halen, Cyndi Lauper, David Lee Roth, the Monkees, and Bon Jovi.

**CISCO:** But first we have Ric Osaka's new one, "Emotion in Motion."

**EGBERT:** That's Ocasek, Gene. This begins with Ric playing Prince Charming.

**CISCO:** You think he looks like Prince Charming?

**EGBERT:** Well, he's dressed like Prince Charming. And he's carrying Sleeping Beauty. She looks dead, though. It must be Dead Beauty.

**CISCO:** There is a little munchkin laughing at this scene as he looks on in the background.

**EGBERT:** That's a jester. He's got bells on. Notice the fool's cap.

**CISCO:** Dead Beauty is not being played by Ric's model girlfriend.

**EGBERT:** No, she's not Paulina, but she's not too shabby.

**CISCO:** This one looks like the estranged wife of Richard Golub, the rapping lawyer. What's her name?

**EGBERT:** Marisa Berenson. And notice the very large specimens of fly agaric or *amanita muscaria* mushrooms among the enchanted flora of this scene. This notorious hallucinogen must have been responsible for the princess's lifeless condition, Gene.

**CISCO:** Now the scene changes to a waterfall. The princess beckons from beyond. Ric must think he's the White Rock Soda Girl. He looks like he's dying for a cigarette.

**EGBERT:** Do you know that expression "Beyond the Pale"? Well, this is the Pale.

**CISCO:** Where are we now?

**EGBERT:** We're in the Lair of the Hideous Creature, who is, no doubt, responsible for Dead Beauty's unfortunate situation.

**CISCO:** Ric lops off the Hideous Creature's helmet with his sword.

**EGBERT:** I saw a play just like that in the Giants game on Sunday.

**CISCO:** Ric takes a vial from the corpse of the Hideous Creature and returns to attempt to wake Dead Beauty with it. He's cradling her in his arms, and he has his big muddy boot all over her one-of-a-kind Anouska Hempel princess gown.

**EGBERT:** Gosh, she is awfully pale. The potion looks suspiciously like a bottle of Halston Perfume.

**CISCO:** Whatever it is, it woke her up, and the color is returning to her face.

**EGBERT:** Maybe it was tequila.

**CISCO:** I wonder what it's like to wake up in Ric's arms.

**EGBERT:** I hope we never find out.

**CISCO:** Next we have Van Halen's "Love Walks In." Needless to say, this is another concert video.

**EGBERT:** What strikes me immediately is that the drummer's kit is made of tubular Lucite drums that look like giant crack vials.

**CISCO:** Sammy looks like one of those people we used to make fun of.

**EGBERT:** You mean people who wear pajamas in public?

**CISCO:** No, I mean people who take themselves too seriously. This is a real undershirt band.

**EGBERT:** Italian-style undershirts at that. Sammy's says "Can't Drive 55."

**CISCO:** I think this video may have played a big part in Congress's changing the speed on rural interstates. Sammy sure isn't David Lee Roth. He doesn't have the stage presence. Or the armpits.

**EGBERT:** Sammy has those little stickers on his guitar like college football players get on their helmets for making a great play.

**CISCO:** Do you think that Van Halen intentionally made a low-budget, no-frills video as an anti-David statement?

**EGBERT:** Well, this is a sensitive ballad. And it may just be a way of bringing the live presence of Sammy and Eddie and the boys to those towns that are just too small for a Van Halen concert, like Middletown, for example. But what I don't understand, Gene, is why, with all of the technological breakthroughs, singers are still using old-fashioned microphones that block the view of their face. Of course, in this case it's no tragedy, but still, it makes you think. Why can't singers have tiny microphones built into their teeth or their bridgework?

**CISCO:** I agree, Rog. They could at least have Lucite mikes. Next we have Cyndi Lauper's "True Colors."

**EGBERT:** It opens with Cyndi in a backless black dress sitting on the floor with her back to us, hitting on a bongo and holding a black orchid.

**CISCO:** Her hairdo looks like a telephone pole.

**EGBERT:** It's a work of art.

**CISCO:** She throws the black orchid away, and it lands on a beach, where some adult-looking children who are building sand castles come across it. They all have hairdos like hers.

**EGBERT:** No, those are ostrich-plume headdresses. Suddenly the sand castles are bigger than life.

**CISCO:** There's a beached robot... I mean rowboat. And there are two matrons in a having tea, dressed as if they're at the Plaza Hotel.

**EGBERT:** Or Bally's Casino Hotel. Now we see Cyndi dressed just like Pola Negri, the silent film vamp, wearing some pearls and not much else and wearing a crystal chandelier on her head. Now she's lying on a bed in a



David Berinck

## Sammy sure isn't David Lee Roth. He doesn't have the armpits.

filmy negligee, draped in filmy sheets.

**CISCO:** The man of her dreams appears. He looks like Todd Rundgren. He's pulling on her sheets.

**EGBERT:** Now she's doing the White Rock Girl routine, sliding off a wrecked automobile into a pool. The car, by the way, looks just like the black-and-white that Broderick Crawford drove in *Highway Patrol*.

**CISCO:** Now she's kissing the man of her dreams.

**EGBERT:** That must be her boyfriend/

manager. I know he has long hair, and I don't think Cyndi would kiss another guy. He looks like Tiny Tim only a lot better. The kiss causes the screen to go into a fit of solarization in which we can see their auras blending together.

**CISCO:** Now she has her hair au naturel, as much as possible.

**EGBERT:** And she's wearing a full skirt made of newspaper clippings, possibly her own, as she walks the beach in high heels.

**CISCO:** Finally we see Cyn in the album cover shot, mostly naked, staring at her reflection in a mirrored pool, like Nar...

**EGBERT:** Narcosis?

**CISCO:** Narcissus.

*David Lee Roth: Armpits to die for.*

# AMERICANS LUST FOR BLOOD & CHOCOLATE

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EGBERT: I thought that was an excellent video. Her movements are just like Kabuki dancers'. I could watch that every day around 5:30.

CISCO: Yeah, with your margarita.

EGBERT: Well, certainly not with a Bartles & Jaymes. I make my margaritas with pure sea salt.

CISCO: Next we have David Lee Roth in "Going Crazy."

EGBERT: This begins outside of the Picasso Brothers Moving Company, which is in a Hispanic neighborhood, judging from the couple fighting in a Ricky Ricardo vs. Charo manner.

CISCO: In real life the Picasso Brothers are David and his manager. David just pulled up in a really nice convertible.

EGBERT: They all have great silver Wayne Cochran-style pompadours. Which one is David?

CISCO: I'll bet he's the really fat one.

EGBERT: No! Oh, wow, it really is. This is the best costume change Dave ever made. Really incredible. And once again Dave has scored some swell chicks for his video.

CISCO: This is so interesting I don't even want to talk.

EGBERT: I will say that this seems to be rather Rodney Dangerfield-influenced — Dave looks like Rodney plus about 200 pounds.

CISCO: He actually looks good fat like that. But we cut to Dave as his thin self with his band, and he looks really good that way too.

EGBERT: Five costume changes in three seconds.

CISCO: I guess we were meant to compare this with Van Halen's video.

EGBERT: It's no contest. David and the guys are better in every way.

CISCO: It's funny that David is so much more athletic than Sammy Hagar, but he looks less like a jock.

EGBERT: He's also the only real rocker who knows how to dress. If I were into cycling or volleyball, I'd dress exactly like Dave.

CISCO: That was so much fun.

EGBERT: Probably the best video we've seen since his last video.

CISCO: Next we have the Monkees' "That Was Then, This Is Now."

EGBERT: This is a semi-documentary with a lot of historical footage of the best things of the '60s, like experimental motorboats, miniskirts, dance crazes, and body painting.

CISCO: That was then. Now we flash to what they look like now.

EGBERT: Like your father. Notice that Mickey Dolenz is no longer the drummer. Notice that there are only two Monkees in the Monkees.

CISCO: Davy Jones didn't rejoin until after they did the video. Although there are girls in the audience screaming "Davy, Davy!"

EGBERT: That's because the audience was then and this is now. Also as of now, Michael Nesmith is still holding out.

CISCO: Why is that?

EGBERT: For one thing, he's a very successful video maker.

CISCO: He sure didn't make this one.

EGBERT: And for another, his mother invented White Out, so he's very wealthy. And, if my guess is correct, he

also wouldn't want to go on stage dressed like this. Why are they wearing ugly red T-shirts and jeans? Why aren't they wearing mod clothes?

CISCO: Because that was then and this is now.

EGBERT: But we liked then better!

CISCO: That's the point.

EGBERT: So why can't they give us what we liked about then now?

CISCO: Well, the kids in the audience seem to dig it.

EGBERT: That's because the audience is then and this is now. They're trying to fool us with time-warp editing. I feel cheated.

CISCO: Next we have Bon Jovi's "You Give Love a Bad Name," the most requested video on MTV this week. Another concert video.

EGBERT: Girls love this band. Jon Bon Jovi used to go out with Diane Lane, so there must be some reason for it.

CISCO: He's a great-looking guy. And he's got a new perm. I don't know about that.

EGBERT: I like the perm. In fact, if I had seen this video I might not have cut all my hair off. Gosh, there sure is a lot of cleavage in the front row.

CISCO: I really don't get the appeal of these concert videos. Why is this the No. 1 video?

EGBERT: Well, for one thing, Gene, it gives you the feeling of what it's like to be on stage with Bon Jovi without giving you the feeling of being clubbed on the head by fat security guys in T-shirts. And all of the would-be rockstars out there can pick up a lot of tips. Notice how Bon Jovi holds his mike? He actually keeps his thumb on top of it.

CISCO: I'll have to remember that when I play golf.

EGBERT: I'd say it's so he doesn't shatter his front teeth by accident. A helpful hint.

CISCO: I still don't get why this is such a big video.

EGBERT: Because they have the usual male metal fans plus all of those female fans.

CISCO: Why do girls like this guy so much?

EGBERT: Let's ask a girl. Why do girls like this guy so much?

GIRL: I've met a lot of teenage girls who are hot for Jon Bon Jovi. Maybe they like it because it's an anti-girl song about that bitch that ruined my life.

CISCO: Is this song about Diane Lane?

GIRL: Maybe. It's about how he did everything right. How she really fucked him up.

EGBERT: Actually, I can't understand any of the words, but I did think I heard "Diane Lane" in there somewhere. Although it could have been "dyin' airplane." I wish this one had the lyrics in subtitles.

CISCO: Yeah, with the actual spelling of Bon Jovi. Gee, that went by quickly. It was definitely less than two minutes.

EGBERT: No, it only seemed that way, Gene. Actually we're out of time. But we'll see you all again At the Videos.

*Roger Egbert and Gene Cisco frequently save the whales with Glenn O'Brien and Scott Cohen.*

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# RICHARD BELZER OR WHAT?

A dangerously funny comedian tries to answer a trick question: Am I me or am I The Belz?

Article by Christine Andersen Rubens

There are rough times, and there are Richard Belzer's rough times. In 1978 he said he didn't "go for that stuff about a comic either being constantly 'up' or a depressed neurotic in private." But in 1981, when his world started to break apart, he conceded that the pressure of being "on" around-the-clock pushed him to the limits, and his doctor advised him to quit the morning radio show that was making him a household name around New York. He's had audience members and guest stars attack him. A woman once threw a lit candle at him during his act. So far, the nicest thing I'd heard about Belzer was "One of his ex-wives cleans my teeth." On stage he is His Babeness, the Marquis de Belzer, saying what he thinks, whether he means it or not. No one is safe.

Mr. T.: "A method schvartza."

Letterman: "David what's-his-name."

Reagan: "Rambo Ron, the fuckin' mindless cowboy asshole."

Bob Dylan: "The Certs of religion—stop, you're both right!"

He even attacks his friends. He has an impression of Al Pacino that is, perhaps, the best of all his impressions.

Any second now I am to meet Belzer. He's being interviewed on CNN's *Take Two*, the afternoon news/fun-couple show. At the CNN office a yupwardly mobile young man escorts me to a large, sunny room dominated by a wide-screen color TV offering CNN.

"Here he is," says the yup, and quickly disappears. The man facing the set turns to me and extends his hand. "Nice to see you," says Belzer, turning back to the set.

This isn't "The Belz" speaking, this is Mr. Richard Belzer. His watch is nondigital, maybe he's OK. I'm impressed by his outfit. "This is the daytime-in-Atlanta look," he says—gray tweed Italian silk-and-linen trousers, a pale blue shirt, and a beautiful white linen jacket.

"I used to live on Riverside Drive, and a semifamous photographer had his studio next door to me. And he put all these interesting things outside in the trash. And one day I saw this jacket, I mean on top of a scrim or something, and it was just a little dusty. So I took it to the cleaners, and the rest is history."

The CNN yup returns to fetch Richard for the interview.

"OK, I just have to do my Stanislavski," he says.

The Belz is on now. On air, he brings up Chernobyl, just a day old at this point. "Did Russia pass gas yesterday, or what? I was sleeping all day."

After the CNN interview, the Belz and I take a cab to Columbus, New York's chicest place to be seen, co-owned by Rick Newman, Belzer's manager and longtime friend, who gave him his break as emcee at a New York club called *Catch a Rising Star*. We're soon seated at "Richard's Table" in a glass-enclosed section that juts out onto the sidewalk. Richard tells me he has two



Robert Burcher

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stepdaughters, 13 and 16. "At first it was very, I hate to use the word, but sobering. It let me into being an adult. They call me 'Dad' sometimes, and I go to the school meetings, and I sign things. There I am with my shades on, you know, and there are all these people, really straight people. Nice people, but straight. If they only knew!"

I suspect that when he talks about his daughters Belzer thinks about his own childhood and what he lived through, he and his brother Leonard growing up in a housing project in Bridgeport, Connecticut, the victims of numerous beatings inflicted on them primarily by their mother, but sometimes by their father, "when our mother was too tired." It's all a part of Belzer's act now. The first time I saw his last HBO special, the part about the beatings didn't seem so double-edged. But after reading all the background on Belzer, suddenly the bit seemed funnier and harder to watch.

His "family" now is carefully chosen—his wife Harlee McBride, his stepdaughters, the friends from the management office, some private people like Robert DeNiro and Al Pacino, and his brother Leonard.

"My brother and I have a great relationship. When we were kids we used to fight all the time, really fight a lot. But that was because of the way we were treated by our parents, so we just took it out on each other. There was a lot of violence and humor in our childhood; we were either laughing hysterically or fighting. We're very passionate, but we're very close. I'm glad I have a brother. I don't know what would have happened to me if I didn't. I would have gotten beat up twice as much!"

"I used to try to make my mother laugh. It would work once in a great while. I would do Jerry Lewis. I met Jerry at *Comic Relief* and I told him that story. I said, 'I'm forever indebted to you because I used to do an impression of you as a kid.' I looked exactly like him when I was a kid... not that we're dissimilar now! And I would just do my Jerry Lewis stuff. Sometimes my mother would laugh. My kitchen was the toughest room I ever worked. My mother was the audience, you know: I didn't make her laugh, I got hit. The refrigerator door would swing open, the light would go on, and I'd do ten minutes."

I see him write "little shit" on a blank piece of paper, and I know the idea has to do with his grandfather: "little shit" is what his grandfather called him.

He puts the paper away and looks up. "Dreams are like stones," he says. "You know, if you hold one in your hand you feel new grooves in it, it takes on new meaning as the day goes on. My wife is great at telling me what my dreams mean. We've been married since... 14 months, February of '85. We eloped, actually. We were going to get married in June, but

**Some of Belzer's newfound joy in life came when he found he had cancer two years ago.**

we went away in February of that year and went to San Diego and said, 'Let's drive down to Mexico.' So we went to Mexico and got married in a little storefront place that said 'Marriages and Divorces.' Some girl married us who could legally marry people. It was fun. I'm remarkably happy. It's amazing. I didn't know Jews could be this happy."

Belzer married his first wife in 1965. During the seven years they were together he didn't always fare so well; sometimes he sold drugs just to pay the rent. In 1971, while he was living in Soho and his marriage was about to bottom out, an ad appeared in *The Village Voice* that turned out to be a casting call for *The Groove Tube*. His wife said, "If you're so fucking funny, why don't you go down there." He did. He appeared in ten routines and later costarred in the film version.

At the urging of friends in *The Groove Tube* he put together a stand-up act and in 1973 started appearing as a regular at *Catch a Rising Star*. By 1974 he was emceeing. Over 100 performances in the *National Lampoon Show* led to meeting Lorne Michaels, and later turned into an opportunity for Belzer to warm up the audience before *Saturday Night Live* and finally to host the show in 1979. Pal George Carlin gave him his first chance on *The Tonight Show*, although the network bigwigs were either unsure just who this Richard Belzer was, or they knew who he was and were nervous he'd say exactly the wrong thing on network TV. Guest appearances on *Rock Concert* materialized, and finally Belzer seemed to have it made: his own morning radio show and a weekly salary of \$1,400. More than he'd made in a year at *Catch a Rising Star*. But he quit the radio show. It was, after all, Top 40 AM radio and it was getting in his way at night.

"I have to make a quick call," says Belzer. "I'll be right back, kids!"

Richard has been trying to get in touch with longtime friend Paul Shaffer about attending the opening tonight of Belzer's new act.

Back at the table he kvetches, "So Shaffer doesn't take his own calls anymore, you have to leave a message for him. Who does he think he is? Henry Mancini?"

"Comedy is a mystery to people. People don't know what to make of comedians. I think that has a lot to do with the way certain comedians are; their personalities are shaped by what's expected of them, as opposed to how they really are. I know it's





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taken me a while to just be centered and be who I am and how I want to be rather than meet the needs of 'casual observers,' if you will."

Some of this newfound joy in the mystery of life came when, two years ago in a routine medical exam, doctors found Belzer had testicular cancer. That was a Friday. He went into surgery on Saturday, followed by radiation treatments, and is now completely well. "I was lucky," he says. "Let's blow this pop stand and get some Sen-Sen."

We stop in at a photo studio where Belzer takes some shots, and as we're leaving a man in the lobby screams, "What are you doing in the building?"

Richard turns on The Belz. "Getting a blow job. Why?"

"I knew it! I knew it!" the man screams.

An empty nightclub in the afternoon is where Walter Hill and Alan Rudolph meet in their dreams. Six or eight people are inside Caroline's comedy club just "hanging out." Two men in a corner of the bar are talking about which comics are obscene. Someone asks Belzer how the photo session went. "Well, you know me, I'm always fun," he answers quietly.

He walks alone into the main room. It is dark, but a glow from some celestial system of indirect lighting makes the empty club look like a smoke-filled room. Through the glass partition I watch Belzer walk around the room. Maybe he's putting little pieces of himself into the corners, little safety nets of familiarity in case the gods send him a truly hostile crowd.

An hour before the show is scheduled to begin, I check out the crowd.

There are a lot of people in Caroline's baseball jackets; I assume they work there, but they're not waitpersons. So far, the audience ranges in age from 28 to 35, the men have beards and mustaches, the women have little or no makeup. Music is blaring from the overhead speakers. It's "Once in a Lifetime"... "Same as it ever was, same as it ever was." Perfect. In Richard's HBO special he does the "David Byrne Work-Out Video": "Fat as you ever was, fat as you ever was..."

The next wave of audience to show is younger, hipper, trendier, better dressed, slicker. Then the suburbs arrive. A woman dressed like a loaf of "Wonder Bread screams her conversation to her friends six tables away.

Day-uh, that wuz thuh funniest thing I evah sow-uh." They are already spilling their drinks on each other. A man across from me at the adjoining table tells me his father's uncle was Joe Besser of the Three Stooges. A group of four middle-aged men and women are seated at ring-side. I have an intense feeling of doom as the lights dim. "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to Caroline's. You saw our current head-

line performer on his HBO special, he'll be on *Miami Vice* this Friday, please welcome to Caroline's RICHARD-BELZER!!"

The room isn't completely full—it's a rainy Tuesday night—but the applause is deafening.

"Hello, New York!" Richard greets his public. "Did Russia pass gas, or what? Was that like a nuclear fart, or what? Is there a big cloud that's going to come here, or..." (extreme feed-back drowns out the punchline and he loses the joke, he's spent the day building).

He talks to the audience. To a man who replies that "that" is his pocket-book, Richard screams to the heavens, "Gender Identity Clinic! Am I my date or am I me?" He grabs the Wonder Bread woman's red leather purse and, opening it, he falls back several feet against a brick wall, doubled over with laughter for a moment. Then he turns the purse toward the audience and shows us the red folds inside.

"It looks like a dancer I used to go out with!"

Some feminists in the house react vocally. "People are hissing, like pussies don't look anything like that. 'Oh yeah, they look like construction sites.'"

Aha! This is the Belzer the people who book Carson were worried about. He's everywhere at once. He takes a man's hat from a table, a straw boater with a black brim, tries it on and bravely looks ridiculous. He tap dances.

The couple on my left is deep in conversation; he has seen Belzer's HBO special, she hasn't. He explains everything to her. In full. Before Belzer performs it.


A glass breaks somewhere in the club. "I insist that there be no Jewish weddings during my show!" The Belz screams.

Then it happens. A woman in the ringside foursome begins. She is very drunk. Richard controls The Belz while he tries to get this heckler to shut up. "Let me get to the verb!" he shouts at one point. The audience gets fed up with her, too. Finally, Richard pulls some money out of his trousers, counts it, and says, "Here's 40 bucks. Let me punch you once in the face." She reaches for the money.

She finally shuts up, and we are treated to a beautifully funny story about Belzer's experience with Miles Davis, Belzer starting as an adoring fan and working his way up to Davis's errand boy. A routine destined to be a classic. The Belz takes on Sinatra next, but as he starts, an invisible bolt of lightning throws him to the floor for challenging the "Chairman of the Board." So he moves to a more lightweight topic, Julio Iglesias. "He parts his hair from Cleveland."

The show's over. While Belzer is still taking his bows, he and the drunk woman hug each other, and she kisses him on the cheek. She's had a wonderful time. If she can remember it in the morning.





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**P**eople don't want to believe that I'm Santa Claus. Especially the ones who believe in Santa Claus. I don't mind. It makes my job easier.

It's all because I'm young and I have a great body—also, I don't wear the red suit. And I shave. So maybe it's time I explained a few things about where Santa and Santacorp are at these days.

Santa hasn't worn that red suit in 30 years. It started after the war. First there were radar and jets, then the heat-seeking missiles. Ever try flying into the States from the Pole unidentified? They'll wax your ass. My dad was the first Santa to get rid of the red suit. He wore midnight blue. I myself like camouflage. I'm into survival.

My dad was Santa too. People think there's only been one, that this same guy has been around for 500 years. There have been dozens of Santas. It's an inherited gig, sort of like being a king. My grandfather was Santa Claus, too. My family doesn't go all the way back to the first Santa Claus, though. There've been several dynasties. My family got started in 1927, after Santa XXIII retired. He didn't have any kids, wasn't married. The rumor was that he was gay. Supposedly he was friends with Rudolph Valentino, who the reindeer was named after. Supposedly he used to chase the elves around, but who knows?

My granddad worked for him and knew the ropes enough to take over. He was Joseph Santa Claus. Santa's not really a name. It's sort of like Cardinal. Like Terence Cardinal Cook. I'm Phil Santa Claus.

Anyway, back to the suit. The red outfit got really dangerous when the guns got good about 120 years ago. Santa XXII had his legs filled with shrapnel. Santa XXIII wore a bulletproof vest and had a tough time moving in it. But for me, it's not so much that the red suit is dangerous. It's ugly. You should try picking up a girl in it. Besides, if you wear it, nobody's really going to believe you're Santa Claus. They'll think you're in the Salvation Army, or that you work for Macy's. When I tell kids I'm a plainclothes Santa, they usually believe me. Especially when they see my beeper.

As for no beard and being slim, hey, I'm single, OK? And as Santa, you really have to be fit. The bags are heavy, and we don't use elves anymore.

We had to let most of them go. I didn't mind when they didn't want to be called elves anymore. I could dig that. But when we started getting lawsuits from female elves, and calls from lawyers about us not having enough black and Hispanic elves, it just got to be too much. I wanted black elves and tried to get some pygmies, but they were all too stoned out and wouldn't go to the North Pole. Then I tried to get the cat from Fantasy Island to be my token Hispanic, but he wanted too much bread. I really think all of this equal opportunity stuff was leading up to trying to replace me with a lady Santa Claus.

Actually, we're not at the North Pole anymore. It got to be more trouble than it was worth. It was always a drag, being

# SANTA COOL

Don't expect to see a fat guy in a red suit coming down your chimney this Christmas. Santa's got a brand new bag.

Article by Glenn O'Brien



Gale Vayns

cold and dark half the year. But then about 100 years ago, guys start showing up on sleighs with dogs. Then zeppelins start coming over, dropping flags and stuff. Pretty soon you've got Russians, Americans, and Norwegians all over the place. Jacques Cousteau is sneaking around. Then, one day I'm

walking to work, and a goddamned submarine surfaces right under my feet. I don't miss the place at all.

We do still have some reindeer. I hate 'em. Just keep 'em around for the pictures. For one thing, they're stupid, and for another, they're all drug addicts. Absolutely true. They eat these mush-

rooms and go berserk just like the Eskimos. When I travel, I usually go by chopper. And sometimes I just fly commercial. But there was a real Rudolph. He could lap up the schnapps, but as for guiding a sleigh, forget it.

In case you don't know, I'm not coming down your chimney this Christmas, so don't wait up. We used to do it, but that was before everybody had guns. Besides that, in the old days there weren't so many people to service. Today, you've got Jews believing in Santa Claus. Black Muslims. Japs. You've got atheists who don't believe in God writing to you.

Fuck chimneys. Santa XXI got burns over 60 percent of his body trying to come down a chimney. I don't get into too many houses. You get caught, it's breaking and entering. What are you going to tell the cops? "Hey man, I'm Santa Claus!"

I still do hit a few spots every year, just to keep the legend alive. It's like UFOs. As long as a few people see them, most people are going to believe. But anyplace I make an appearance, I totally case beforehand: no firearms, no hidden alarms, no history of heart disease or insanity in the family.

About that old "he knows when you are sleeping, he knows when you're awake, he knows when you've been bad or good" bit, well, apparently some Santas have been kind of psychic. I myself have no abilities in that area. Personally, I believe that radio waves block out that stuff. But anyway, we're into computers and we're not beyond a wiretap now and then. We generally do know if you've been bad or good.

One thing about being Santa. Everybody rips you off. They use your name, your image, and you don't see a dime. Sure it's better to give than receive, but if you never receive you're out of business. So I've got no royalties, no licensing, no nothing. So how does Santacorp survive? Well, we couldn't survive without certain grants from people whose interests are served by our being around. I'll admit there are some department stores involved. But you'd be surprised how many corporations contribute because they're concerned Christmas could get too religionized. People don't want to see it ruined.

And we also do a little consulting work with people who want to know who's been bad or good. We're freelance, but we don't deal with the KGB. And we're on pretty good terms with the Vatican. Personally, there's nothing I like more than a really well done nativity scene. And if it wasn't for you-know-who being born, well, I'd probably be a cook in a health food restaurant.

I'm a regular guy. I like Rickie Lee Jones and ZZ Top. I watch *Hill Street Blues* and *Cosby*. My biggest thrill? Meeting Wayne Gretzky. By the way, I don't drink Coca-Cola. I drink Pepsi Free.

Anyhow, if you want something for Christmas that you can't get anywhere else, you might want to contact The Sleigh Team. Ho, ho, ho.





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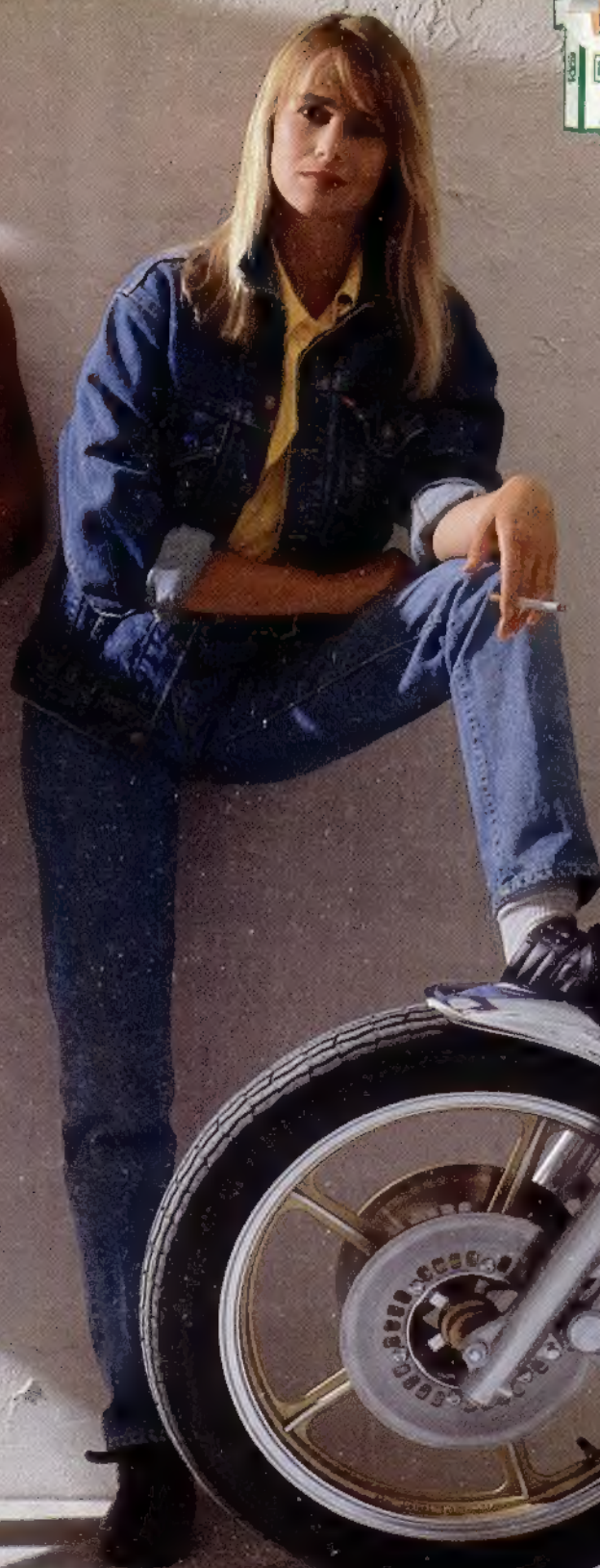
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